
MODERN AMERICAN
POETRY - 1935

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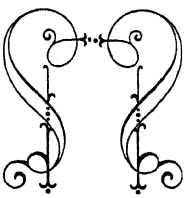
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MODERN AMERICAN POETRY—1935

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EDITED BY

GERTA AISON



NEW YORK

THE GALLEON PRESS

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THE GALLEON PRESS

Reference

FE 18 '60

Manufactured and printed in the U. S. A.

For

Edwin Arlington Robinson

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY — 1935

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INTRODUCTION

Modern American Poetry, herewith published for the fourth consecutive year, requires but few words of introduction. First conceived in 1932 as a collection devoted to the work of new and rising authors who might otherwise find it difficult to secure a hearing, each successive year's compilation has added fresh proof of the objective's validity. Many of the authors represented in the early issues have long since demonstrated the permanent qualities of their literary talents; their work may be found at almost any time in current periodicals, on the shelves of new books, in poetry and in prose.

For the benefit of the new reader, unfamiliar with the plan of these annual compilations, a few words of explanation may be forgiven. There is no true basis of comparison between the yearly volumes of *Modern American Poetry* and the various reprint anthologies of "best" poems. This collection does not contain the best poems of 1935 in the sense of the poems written by the acknowledged headline names. The new reader will seek in vain for the work of poets he will recognize by reputation. *Modern American Poetry,* compiled on the basis of free competition contains only the best work of the newcomers, men and women making trial flights on Pegasus. He is a balky steed; many who mount find the voyage too bumpy for their taste.

How many of our singers will reach the top is a conjecture each reader may decide for himself. We present the evidence. Here is their best work precisely as written, uninfluenced by editorial preferences, unedited save for the most minor sort of spelling conformity. If, gentle reader, you have a taste for adventure, if you have ever felt the urge to follow a winding trail up a mountainside to its hidden source you will experience again the thrill of discovery within these covers. You will not find everything to your taste; you may wish that some of the verses were more polished, some of the phrases more neatly turned. At those times you must recall that the winding trail seldom runs parallel with the well paved highway.

A brief conclusion and the final decision is once more in your hands. Last year an index of poems, by titles, was added in order to facilitate reference. It has been decided, this year, to change the index to one of first lines rather than titles. Cross reference from this index to the contents where poets are listed alphabetically will quickly indicate the page on which any poem may be found.

Thus the task is still again completed. I have nothing to add to what I said last year: Here are the new voices of today—the familiar voices of tomorrow. Which will soon be stilled and which go on to the heights of fame? It is for each reader a question to be individually determined. The book is in your hands; may it give you the same joy of reading that it has given the authors in the writing and its editor in the compiling.

GERTA AISON

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY — 1935

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Dear God, while crimson candles glow
and tinseled trees are ladened so,

Look down on us, I humbly pray
and let all men be kind today.

Let each child know the priceless joy
of fondling some long-wished-for toy;

Give strength to those who need must toil
forever in Grief's barren soil,

Grant peace to those whose loved ones lie
beneath the starry Yuletide sky.

By wreaths of holly, let us be
reminded of His charity.

Send down to us Thy blessings, then,
of love and peace on earth,

Amen.

RECESSION

When I have done my last kind deed
 And sung my last brief lay,
Oh, may I die as crimson leaves
 Die on an autumn day.

When I have dreamed my last sweet dream
 And bade farewell to mirth,
Oh, may I lie where brown leaves lie
 At rest upon the earth.

TO CAESAR AND TO GOD!

He who would not evade life's simple duty—
Would not obstruct life's path o'er which he plods;
Must render unto Caesar what is Caesar's,
And give alike to God that which is God's.

THAT WHICH ABIDES

Though once a king
Whom millions did obey,
Time touched his brow,
And he returned to clay.

E'en though a slave
In bondage from his birth,
Death leveled all,
And earth returned to earth.

Slave, then, or king,
It matters not; each must
Find his abode,
At last, in common dust.

That which abides
While all else falls to naught,
Is but the good
Or ill that we have wrought.

JUST' DREAMIN'

Lazy? Well, yes, I guess perhaps you're right;
I don't seem real ambitious, that's a fact.
You see, it's easier to dream than fight,
A dream is so much lovelier than an act.

I wasn't working and I did not strive
By earnest thought some problem great to solve;
I just felt glad at being here alive,
With no desire life's tangles to resolve.

I was just dreamin'. Do you know the joy
Of dreams unfettered, wayward, roving far?
What ecstasy of bliss without alloy,
Of happiness, with naught to rift or mar!

My fancy roves abroad, o'er land and sea,
Beneath the earth and through the realm of space;
No fleshly bonds restrain my spirit free,
No earthbound weakness clogs its ardent pace.

Life's long-sought goals I now with ease achieve,
Wealth, love, fame, power, all are in my grasp;
The wildest flights of fancy I believe,
The gates of Paradise to me unclasp.

Earth's troubles fall away, forgotten all,
There are no clouds to mar my heaven's blue;
My neighbors—good or bad—I love them all;
My blossoms know no blight, my friends are true.

Yes, I admit it does not change one whit
Life's stubborn facts, nor heal our human ills;
But, oh the joy and radiance of it!
Just dreamin', how it satisfies and thrills!

RAINY NIGHT

The night was a shadow, purple-black,
And light in a silver shaft and dart,
And gleaming pavements and black pools—
And rain, the beating heart.

The day held laughter in her arms,
And with her shining eyes beguiled;
But night took heartbreak to her breast,
An ill-begotten child.

APRIL

If I were blind, if I were deaf and crippled too,
And yet if I could feel the soft rain on my head
And lift my face and breathe the sweet air deeply in,
I'd know that March was dead.

If I were not so old my heart forgot the way
The pulses throb, the breezes blow, the robins sing,
The music sings and beats through all my body, then
I'd know that it was spring.

I could not be so old I would forget them all,
For only spring itself is old as that. And how
Could I not know—My eyes, my ears, my racing blood
Tell me it's April now.

BONDAGE

Held captive in life
To something beyond control,
Fettered to a love undying—
Yet playing a jester's role;

Double bound to someone
Unaware of what critics say,
Willing to die or to suffer
Willing to give and to pay;

Chained to a task forever
Till death shall bring relief:
A prisoner held in bondage
Without a single grief.

A PERSONAL QUESTION

"Who sayest thou I am?
Let the answer truthful be.
What believest thou, my child?
Canst thou no vision see?"

Some claim you're but a teacher
Rabboni; I must kneel.
Others say thou art a prophet
But this I cannot feel.

"Who sayest thou I am?"
When I did see them spear
Thy sides and heart, Oh Lord,
Upon dark Calvary drear;

Thou art the Christ, the living God
Whom I follow day by day.
Blind, beaten, though I am,
Oh Christ, to Thee I pray.

LINCOLN, THE LEADER

The fateful hour had come for men to wake.
The finer life, the tasked and fettered slave
Lacked not the champion bold and men, stern, grave
Came forth to harvest full grown tares and break
The scornful power of sin entrenched and strong.
They fearless came, the fateful hour at hand,
As men of old in Israel's ransomed band,
They stood calm, firm to break the tide of wrong.

Time lays its finger on the blot of sin
And one clear issue parts the goats and sheep,
A deep wide gulf between. Above the din
The finer man stakes life the right to keep.

Portents, at which the bravest stood aghast,
Prove birth throes of a future strange and vast.

TIME'S VERDICT

On time's first altar a soul for gain
Was sacrificed. Alone, in pain
Went forth the blind wan soul of Cain.
Golgotha's hill records a crime
From which men leaped to heights sublime:
The deep strong stirrings of slow time
Foretold unchanging Iron's doom
Through standards raised above Christ's tomb.
The fateful gift, powerful in gloom,
In grief or joy, drew men for ages
Toward higher standards. Brave stern sages
Girt up their loins and stern strife rages
'Twixt night and man. The man has grown
In power. Might friendless, weak, lies prone.

OF ONE WHO PASSED

She came with gleaming sunlight on her face.
She came with glancing sunbeams in her hair.
She was the youngest of an ancient race;
She was the fairest of a race most fair.

She passed as pass the blooms of sweet April.
I never saw her golden face again.
Yet hope within my heart has dwelling still
And slumbers there with her dark sister, Pain.

A PRAYER FOR A GALAHAD

Ah pure of heart, ah, Galahad,
The knightly years are flown
Since thou didst tilt for love 'gainst lust
That law might keep her throne.

But still we pray will come a youth
(Oh God, were we but sure!)
Whose strength will be as that of ten
Because his heart is pure.

Then hail to heart and vision high!
The knightly years are flown.
Still law calls love and purity
To guard her on her throne.

SECRET RHAPSODY

Hidden in my heart there is a song—
Such a song as winds never bore!
Such a song as ocean's bass alone
Could serve for harmony!
Within my breast the violins cry,
Violins no symphony could ever know,
Born of the lips, strung by pain,
They sing eternity!
Drums are wild in my throat tonight,
Drums no native could ever build,
Progeny of despair and maddest joy,
They sound desire!
Hidden in my heart there is a song,
Such a song as sings forever
Down the years, beyond all death—
Listen to your melody, beloved!

ELEGY

Flowers still will bloom when you are dead,
Bright with their flagrant white and red;
Winds still will run fingers through my hair,
Nor mind the silver that increases there.

Grass still will sparkle when you are dead,
And star-white nights will come like lead,
Each on cloud chained feet, but I will be
Hating and bearing their beauty patiently.

I still will breathe when you are dead,
Warm with the memory of love words you said;
Dearest, my dear, you do not lie alone:
My heart's in your hand, a small red stone!

AUTUMN

Just outside my window
Gray of maple bough
Interlaced branches
Adorned with lingering leaf.

Just beyond the network
Gray-blue of the sky
Touched along earth's margin
With flaming red.

A SPIRIT OF THE WILDS

A spirit of the wilds am I!
As the hummingbird from flower to flower
So I from plain to peak to white-capped ocean waves;
Forever I go like the changeful wind
That blows when the year is in spring.

A spirit of the wilds am I!
I rest not day or night.

AFTERWARDS

I shall find rest by the river of silence
Down the long road that leads to peace.
Stars there will be above and about me
And silvery moonbeams at my feet.

And when you come the stars will grow radiant
With knowledge of what our joy will be.
The love that I hold for you there will be infinite
Our souls . . . united . . . will not die.

ANNIVERSARY

I saw the apple blossoms shine
Where the orchard lies upon the hill
Early the first spring you were mine.
I saw the apple blossoms shine
There in a broad and silver line.
About us all the world was still.
I saw the apple blossoms shine
Where the orchard lies upon the hill.

LAND-LOCKED EMPIRE

Shall I despair of holiday
 When I am conqueror?
Shall I regret the eager past
 When I am emperor?

What shall I conquer? Why, my life;
 And time shall be my slave.
My empire? It is all the world
 Locked in this little grave.

SAFE-KEEPING

Within the spell of spider web,
 Secure, inviolate,
A shrine impossible for bee,
 Clumsy, to desecrate,
I have stored the bitterness of love,
 The honey of my hate—
Impossible for you to steal
 Passion insatiate.

TONIGHT—BUT TOMORROW!

The night is clean, cold and clean.
The wind trickles through my fingers
like dark water.
The wind cuts my face
like a thin-edged knife,
and I am glad;

for in the house are madmen,
jazzling, razzling, dazzling fools,
hot-eyed and lusty-armed,
bitter of mouth and futile.

I face the half-open window:
cold gleam of the night through the glass,
clean breath of the night through the space.
I call to the stars; they are bright and proud,
and far away from fools.
I, too, shall be bright and proud,
far, far away from fools.

Tonight—I shall vomit with these idiots
their filthy, acrid mirth
into the black cup of the night.
(One can never soil the night:
it is dark, and doesn't show.)

But *tomorrow* night—I shall stand here;
the night will gleam and wait;
the wind will cut me with its thin breath,
and I shall touch the stars!

BRIGAND IN MAYTIME

I fancied the stave of a bird one May
And I filched it arrantly,—
Its beauty drenched, like the riant day,
The span of me.

I envied the dreams of a glacial pool
As it browsed in a beryl mead,—
My hat dipped into its thoughts to cool
A brigand's greed.

I borrowed the heart of a girl one May
With the stealth a brigand's got
But she, like my other prey,
Missed it not.

PHILOSOPHER'S LAMP

Because I know the whole of me
The vesture of my soul on earth,
So not a Judas to its birth,
Must honest homespun be.

A tiny lea I till apart,
Fenced yet, friends—do not despair!
You'll find a gate to creak and wear—
It opens on my heart!

I've lit my lamp—it serves me well,
Electric wicks are briefly bright
But mine shines longer than a night;
I hardly think I'll trade or sell.

Only a lamp beneath to bask,
Only a light I know I ask.

IMMORTALITY

When thy dear face has not this rosy glow,
 Thy lips, that pout, their cherry hue,
 Nor eyes this violence of blue,
And thy bright hair has turned from gold to snow;

When thy white breast lacks this rotundity,
 Thy velvet thigh its arching curve,
 And this lithe form has lost its verve,
And cries not out of love's profundity;

Then think not that my love for thee will cool,
 Nor that my heart will thee disdain
 Because the world calls old and plain
The body God used only as a tool.

Nay, then, dear heart, thy tender love will be
 Thy precious form, thy spirit sweet
 Will come, my knowing eyes to greet
Through thine, and will an angel show to me.

And I then, too, will be no longer young,
 But ripe, mayhap, enough to deal
 With that which now I trembling feel
And see, of which at least I will have sung:

The matchless beauty of thy kindness wise
 That will no evil thing condone,
 But praises godliness alone
Of all the riches laid before thine eyes!

DEVOTIONAL

As you knelt to drink from a spring in the rocks,
You worshipped the Maker of all things you loved in Nature.
More sacred was your simple, loving act
Than a church of drowsy people leafing the hymnals!

SYNTHETIC LOVE

"I believe only in synthetic love—"
Your words, they were.
Had I also believed that,
I would have survived sans pain.
Perhaps I *do* believe in only
That love, synthetic love!
Of course, there is no pure love.
I *do* believe!

Oh, . . . but the pain lingers . . .

A PROMISE FULFILLED

The words you spoke
That night are
Ghastly, even now, to me:
"Remember, our promise . . .
Whenever either of us met
Another?
Well, . . . I have."

And all my world crumbled.

TO A GREEN FIELD

A carpet of emerald
E'en a queen would deign to tread!
So majestically this greensward
Stretches 'neath blue sky o'erhead.
Mid lush grass a rivulet wanders
Winding onward toward the sea.
As it goes, doubtless it ponders
On another Trinity.

AMBITION

That soul illumined with Ambition's glow
By Stygian rivers of sin is vanquished not—
Serenely, toward a goal such light shall go
Obliterating every inky blot
Until desire, culminated, shine
With radiance divine.

TOMORROW

"Tomorrow!" Ah, that day which never comes!
Its repetition meaningless becomes
Unless we, of our own volition cause
Ambition to be stirred, nor one whit pause
Until our cherished goal completed lies—
Then each tomorrow heralds roseate skies!

HE WOULD HE WERE A POET

He would he were a poet;
but
the hush of infinity
lay far too
heavy,
heavy on his soul,
to cheapen it with words
and sixpence . . .

but
the wonder of the universe
is far too
sacred,
to soil it
with egotism of
self-expression . . .

He would he were a poet,
but alas,
he is a man.

SLEEP

Hark to yon bird as it listlessly sings.
Ah! 'tis evening and the curfew-bell rings;
Lulling at the borderland
Drifting into lotus land;
Eyelids heavy,
Languor's levy
Is sleep.

MY LIFE

My life is like a colored ball,
Impermanent and shining;
And I must toss that colored ball,
And never let it fall at all,
Though impulse fail and spirit fall,
Must toss and toss that colored ball,
Impermanent and shining.

Some men have souls that ring and sound,
A bell intoning,
And they may ring and strike that bell,
Or heat it in the fires of hell,
Nor any flaw or blister tell,
Always a perfect-ringing bell,
Deep-voiced, resounding.

But mine is like a colored ball,
Impermanent and shining,
And I must toss that colored ball,
And never let it fall at all,
Though impulse fail and spirit fall,
Must toss and toss that colored ball,
Impermanent and shining.

REVERIE

Let us sit on this bank, Anita,
 And watch the moonbeams in the twilight
Play, until the dark curtain falls
 Bringing the soft hush of night.

Here on this bank shall we sit,
 You and I, in the purple twilight dim,
While the whispering trees overhead
 Chant to us their forest hymn.

List, Anita, to the soft stillness!
 Let us drink our fill of earth and sky.
Such sweet communion shall be ours,
 Sitting on this bank, you and I.

THE ARTIST

The artist sat with brush in hand,
 His canvas clean before him.
His face was aglow with ecstasy
 As the vision passed before him.

He sketched on the canvas line by line;
 His dream began with decision.
The light of heaven shone on his face
 As he sketched his angel-vision.

So with our lives we sketch, we mold,
 Painting and building and weaving,
Weaving a pattern to leave behind,
 Of struggle, perhaps, yet believing.

If we paint our picture on canvas clean
 And carefully weigh our decision,
The beauties of heaven shall be our own
 Reflecting that angel-vision.

CONDEMNED

You who trudge along under cloud banks of indifference, dragging your trampled and tattered hearts listlessly behind you;
You who cower beneath your respective sepulchers; even you who are resolutely plunging down your particular abysses;
You are the ones whom I address, for you are the ones who most resemble me!
I, too, am an infidel to all that may be called constancy; I, too, whirl impotently in my own vagrant and vile little maelstrom;
I, too, am forgetting how to grieve
And I, too, am being deprived of an infinitely tender capacity,
The capacity to suffer even as you have suffered,
Even as you—, you who drag your hearts behind you listlessly, you who cower beneath heavy, moldy sepulchers, or move under cloud banks of indifference,
And you who are resolutely plunging
Down your particular abysses.

NIGHT MAGIC

Softly, through the velvet night,
Star dust drifted down to earth,
In the morning, buttercups,
In fields of green were given birth.

MY FLOWER BED

Asters purple, roses white,
Marigolds so pungent, bright,
Cannas tall and deeply red,
Border round my flower bed.

Colors bold and colors gay,
Meet my eyes at break of day;
Oh golden, sparkling stars of night,
Please guard each lovely flower tight.

A LAKE CABIN

Here is the peace and quiet and cheer,
That comes to weary ones
Who have fought their fight well,
And won. Now can they rest,
Surrounded by fragrant pine and sturdy oak,
In this cabin of great logs,
Facing the quiet water, deep and cool.
All day the song of birds,
At night, the frog and the loon,
The rustle of trees, and
The lap of the waves, bringing peace
To troubled souls, quiet to nerves
That are frayed, and cheer
For the morrow's tasks.

EVENING

I sat at eve and listened to a mumur—like the prayer
Of little insect people—in a garden's drowsy air;
I breathed the heavy fragrance of the honeysuckle bower
And watched the busy, whirring moths sip honey from each flower.

Warm summer evening remembered of old:—
Bumblebee brave in black velvet and gold,
Droning yet louder and clambering down
Throat of a snapdragon, yellow and brown,—
Lightly, from nowhere, a hummingbird's green
Poised, whirring, blurring—too swift to be seen—
Sipped a petunia, a poppy, a rose,
Vanished lightly as thistledown blows.

The flowers of that summertime—their fragrance lingers yet:
The spreading sweet alyssum and the scented violet,
The heliotrope and lavender, the rows of four-o'clocks,
The red and pink verbenas and the tall, old-fashioned phlox.

Warm summer evening remembered of old:—
Dreams of my youth veiled in purple and gold,
Tinging my heart with a hint of regret,
Transient as scent of the sweet mignonette.—
Youth and romance like a hummingbird's sway,
Come lightly, fleetly, and vanish away;
But the rare fragrance diffused by life's flowers
Softly surrounds us in evening's long hours.

ONLY A MOTHER

Only a mother with a tired face
Doing her work in her humble place.
Aspiring not for gold or fame;
Striving only to play her game:
Glad in her heart that her own rejoice
To see her smile or hear her voice.

Only a mother with a brood of four
Who are always asking for something more,
Plodding along in the daily strife;
Bearing the hurts and the scorns of life,
With scarcely a sigh or word of complaint,
Loving always with the grace of a saint.

Only a mother, neither rich nor proud,
Merely one of the surging crowd;
Toiling, striving from day to day;
Facing whatever comes her way:
Giving all for her childrens' sake
That they might better chances make.

Yes, only a mother—treat her well!
Her worth is more than tongue can tell.
Doing her duty her level best,
With scarcely time for self or rest.
She's only a mother, yet I say,
What greater joy could come her way?

LAWYERS BANQUETED BY LAWYERS

Here, assembled for collation, are the law's proponents,
For this repast so exclusive—professionally esoteric—
Hosts and guests, of the law exponents,
The law so venerable and historic.

Around the tables are here arrayed
The hospitable hosts, appearing as if prosperity blest;
And the guests, waiting, a cocktail to be made
To drown trouble and give worry a rest.

Assembled here are characters very divergent:
The reactionary, the conservative, progressive and liberal;
All on this occasion with aims convergent
Upon roasted duck and things convivial.

Being a lawyer here counts no demerits,
Demerits all depend on who's who.
How hunger for food and thirst for spirits
Is revealed by mastication and deglutition of this ragout!

LIFE?

What *is* life? Is it the passing
Of a struggle everlasting?
Seeking endless joy forever,
And alas! finding it never?

Just a plotting and a planning,
Just a short-lived flame a-fanning
With the strength of our ambition,
Of our courage and volition.

Reaching out, forever striving;
Disillusioned, schemes contriving;
Falling, rising, stumbling forward,
Hope renewed, a yearning onward!

One last effort, eager fingers
Twitch to grasp the prize that lingers;
But, all too soon, the race is run,
And death the only goal we've won!

STARS

Ah! stars that gleam above me,
Your wonder I behold;
Blossoms of eternity,
Unfolded petals gold.

Bright garlands of the evening,
A-bloom on heaven's breast;
Ah! beautiful, unending;
Immortal life attest.

Culled by The Master Gardener
Whene'er the dawn appears,
To bloom again in splendor
At night, for countless years.

PETITION

Work fast
Blind sculptor, Life;
My clay will soon be dry.
Transform my soul
With beauty
Ere I die.

NONCHALANCE

You drank
The warm red wine
Of friendship while you laughed;
Then as your cup dropped to the board
You fled.

INJUSTICE

It is not strange that you do not care
For my aging face and my thinning hair;
But, my lovely one,
It is unjust
That when a hundred years are done
You must commingle with the earth,
Your beauty changed,
As I,
To ugly dust.

THE BEGGAR

Stolen moments
Just with thee;
Oh, how sweet, and
Full of ecstasy.

I am
Content to be
A beggar, grateful
For morsels, wee.

Does it matter,
Though how much
Or how little
The morsels be—

Just as long
As they are
The stolen moments
Dear, with thee.

SETTINGS

Dear one, our love
Has not known
Such settings
Of moonlight and stardust.

Nor has it known
Such settings, as
Quiet paths
Or wooded lanes.

But, rather has it known
The background
Of half-muted lips
And misty eyes.

POVERTY

Oh, pity, pity, pity her!
And for her drop a sorrowing tear!
Broken and tired and aged she stares ahead
In whom the fires of living all are dead;
A sadder, lonelier end than I can tell;—
She took an empty pitcher to a broken well.

TRINIDAD

When I came down to Trinidad, the west was bloody-red;
One green gold star was hanging in the vastness overhead;
And two tall peaks, like sentinels, stood where the thin road led.

When I came down to Trinidad, the hills burned in the sun
Like piles of old, dead ashes, their ancient urge long done;
Quiescent, ageless, barren, their right to death hard won.

When I came up from Trinidad, it all came up with me;—
Burned hills and sleepy city between the tall peaks three;
Now Trinidad is on my heart for all the world to see.

YOUNG APRIL CAME TO KANSAS

Young April came to Kansas clothed in a dusty gown;
A waif with dust-stained cheeks and wind-blown and forlorn;
The wind all night was blowing and beating at the fields;
But I heard April crying, early in the morn.

Young April came to Kansas, a beggar maid in brown;
No dogwood or redbud or haw to wake and start;
No lace robes, no carpet green, no diamonds of the rain;
But April is April! So I took her to my heart!

THE BEECH TREE

There may have been others;
But memory only brings to mind
The one that grew beside the road
As we walked up the wooded hill.
We gathered the little nuts,
Each a tantalizing bite;
But I remember the gray, smooth bark,
And the spreading branches wide,
The scent of autumn in the air
And the hazy sky above.

SWEET MEMORIES

Just a little while we tarry,
Life is short at best;
But sweet our fragrant memories
Of those now gone to rest.

Rest, in fields elysian,
Where day is ever fair,
Where clouds cannot o'ershadow
Nor sadness dim the air.

Gone to rest, our hearts are broken,
There seems no sunlight here;
And yet we have a token
That some day all will clear.

We too shall see the glory
Which now we cannot see.
We'll sing with all our loved ones,
Songs of joy through all eternity.

FINALITIES

A choice is made
How final it may be
Binding my life with bands
Of agony!

A choice is made
What happiness may be
Linking my life with love
Eternally.

AMBITION

No longer shall I live with vain regret,
Nor yearn for things in life I cannot get.
Too many years I've spent in futile strife,
Robbing myself of countless joys in life.
What meaning hath it all, this great desire
To reach and reach beyond for what is higher?

How soothing sleep shall be, how sweet the dark
That closes in and quenches life's last spark.
Both love and grief I've known, both pride and shame;
My active restless years have won me fame
But that rare gift, contentment, ne'er was mine
For which I vainly prayed and longed to find.

MUSIC

I heard it once at quiet evening hour
A shepherd coming o'er the hill
Upon his reed such music made
That all the valley echoed to his trill.

Again I heard it down a misty trail
Of moonbeams, filtering through the leaves
A late bird lonely for its wounded mate
Sang out its grief in plaintive melody.

TWO WHO SERVE

The unceasing grind of iron wheels
Strikes deep into the fibre of his brain
This toiler, feeding the insatiate engines
Day by day. Black shapes that loom above
Dark shadows closing over him
Till he, insensate, grows automaton.
Slave! what blight upon thy kingly heritage
Dooms thee to this prison of the soul?

Not so the inventor, he who awoke
Creative spirit to his highest need,
Who with a genius quickened by a will
Wrought into perfect form the beauty of his dream
The while his heart sang with the morning stars
Even as God called into being, Man.

TO M. H. ON HER NINETEENTH BIRTHDAY

Through the scented roses of this bouquet
I wish you, dear, a happy birthday;
One rose for every summer past,
One rose for next year's trumpet blast.

May their fragrance bring to you
Such sweet content the whole year through,
That when next year this day arrives
You again will smile—as my rose arrives.

And as each birthday mounts the years
So shall your sweetness by another rose increase;
And to make their number pass one hundred
Is my quest—from which I'll never blunder.

SILENCE

When I recall my blundering words to thee
And live again your moment of deadly silence,
When I recall your wistful eyes on me
I realize the wisdom of your guidance.
Such a chattering fool was I that night,
So careless, selfish, so very self assured
To rave on, heedless of your plight;
But for your golden silence, I'd ne'er be cured.
The venom of my thoughts you ne'er did blind
With word, but painful glance and lips restrained
Taught me more of pain and womankind,
Than can all the sages with phrases trained.
Therefore, heed not my departure rude and abrupt,
You've quelled my mind, for yours it's too corrupt.

THREE SAYINGS OF KALIL D'AUD

Always you seek for wisdom, my young friend.
You search for her as if she were a statue
Niched in some lofty temple;
Fixed, immovable, as she were rooted there.
Look for her in the happy laugh of some young grape-seller.
Follow her through the breath of bearded grandsires.
Find her where desert sands
Blow in their rhythmic dance,
Frail priestesses
Of the mighty Sun!

Kisses are as wine and food, my son.
Taste moderately thereof.
In the morning of life restrain thy lips,
Lest in thy trembling greed, the bowl slip from thy hands
And shatter.
For lo, our prophet saith,
"The appetite of man cannot be satisfied
With one hour's bloated fullness.
Better a moiety each day . . . even occasional hunger,
Than one stuffed moment
And life-long starvation."

A gentle heart is an oasis in hot sands;
And many caravans, in passing, rest them there
To drink from springs unpoisoned by the alkali
Of mockery. They bathe
And lie in comfort, sure of kindly shelter.
Princes come, and dervishes, and beggars,
But the cool water is the same to all.
There is no difference of a single frond
In the tall palms' shade.

SLEEP

Sleep is a bowl of vari-colored clay
That Night, the potter, whirls upon a wheel.
About its sides the darkling colors steal
Upward in quiet rings, nor go astray
Till dreams begin, in delicate array,
To brighten it. Their varying hues reveal
Sleep's shining shape. Through my closed lids I feel
Her loveliness, and turn my eyes that way.

I wake; and find but shattered shards of sleep—
Argent and azure, jagged bits of jade,
A sapphire scrap that shows the gracious sweep
Of an incomparable beauty, made
By Night alone. As swift the darkness dies
That fragile form fades from my waking eyes.

THE PASSING THRONG

Hopeful faces,
 Gaping eyes,
 Varied noses.
Happy voices,
 Muffled words,
 Silent glances.
Modish women,
 Shabby youths,
 Uniformed men.
Nervous singles,
 Family trios,
 Easy couples.
Quick stepping,
 Lazy gait,
 Heavy walking.
Swinging arms,
 Nervous haste,
 Dodging legs.
Bobbed curls,
 Straight hair,
 Black kinkles.
Clear freshness,
 Colored antique,
 Wrinkled wisdom.

CROSS MANOR

(*Oldest House in Maryland Built in* 1642 *or* 1643)

Sharp scent of boxwood stabs the thickened air.
A line of roof and chimney cuts the sky
With lordly sweep that thrills the knowing eye.
Old bricks are mellowed to a beauty rare,
And dormers see from out their lacy glass
Enduring waters of St. Inigoes.
Undimmed, unchanged by time it calmly flows,
While all the treasure-laden centuries pass.
Afar in town we speed along the way
That whirls and hums. Where hearts are out of tune
And whir and jingle to a clashing rune,
Where roar and shock of man-made wheels hold sway.
We had at least a chance to scan a page
Of leisured living of a gentler age.

FAMILY BURIAL GROUND

The sifting, thin dim shapes were all a-cry,
With brittle voices, as when 'neath the eaves
The icy pendants snap; or with the dry,
Soft sibilance of musty, wind-blown leaves—
With hollow eyes the gates of heaven surveyed,
Opened not yet; and earth forever lost.
"Where do you go?" asked one shape as he swayed
Back and forth. A shade answered as he tossed
In restless agony. "To the cold sea
At night. I drowned." The first dim shape replied,
"And I sleep," he sighed contentedly,
"In peace, my sires and great grandsires beside,
In family burial ground, an ancient pile.
How sweet to rest together for awhile."

CHOICE

I know a swamp that covers miles of ground
With limits undefined, yet only deep
In treacherous spots. Above its waters creep
Bare stumps and birches, withered grass in mound.
Beyond it flows the river ocean-bound,
Whose banks are clearly fixed, and on its deep
Swift-rushing channel countless cargoes sweep
To world-wide ports, where wheels of life abound.
So to each human soul is given choice
To be a swamp or river in this world,
To spread himself in shallow useless form,
Or penetrate to depth profound. A voice
Impels, when eddies in our course are whirled,
That we to waste or deepening stream conform.

EMOTION AND CONVENTION

Emotion and convention
Seem to be at different poles.
When my spirit urges action,
My best judgment caution doles.

There are feelings so ecstatic
That they stir me even yet,
Though inheritance puritanic
Warns me that I may regret.

Yet it's not the things I could do
Nor should do, that recall
To me a thrilling memory;
It's what I do do after all.

QUEST

Alone upon the mountain heights,
I gaze upon the city lights;
Like luring eyes they shine for me,
And wink in seeming mockery
That I should lose life's heady zest.

So, down the wooded slopes I plod—
A little farther down from God—
And walk the glaring, city streets
Whereon the pulse of commerce beats,
And drums its rhythm in my brain.

Here are feet that madly dance,
And hearts that play the games of chance,
While close behind the brilliant eyes
Are unshed tears; and smothered sighs
All masquerade in wildest mirth.

I look to where the mountains tower
In their serenity and power,
And long to soar to some far crest
And once more dream upon its breast.
Kind peaks, aloof in cool, white mist!

THE ROAD TO TAXCO

The road to Taxco is a lovely thing
 Fitting itself to clamber and to keep
 Appointment with small villages. The deep
Valley of Ixtla, still and simmering
With heat is spent and, like a piece of string
 The road binds up mountainous sheaves to leap
 Down through the passes in a headlong steep,
To break on Taxco like an unflung wing.

Near where the lonely peon drives his ass,
 In borders blue the morning-glories shine,
I think the Virgin came to starlit Mass
 And stood before the sacrificial wine
 All robed in blue, at some forgotten shrine . . .
She must have trailed her cloak along the grass.

PANTHEISM

Thirst-bound before the desert's will
 The great Sahuaro cactus grows,
 Itself one towering thorn that knows
The piercing of the wild bird's bill.

When May crawls from the fevered east
 With her unpardonable vow
 To starve the sluice and mock the plough,
Sapping the life from plant and beast.

Then the eternal smile is born
 In light upon those somber towers!
 Sahuaro blooms with milky flowers—
A crown of flesh upon the giant thorn.

THE DREAM

I come to all
Unknown and unperceived—perhaps unwanted, too,
Yet bearing many fantasies
Which life, in all its vagueness, fails to bring.
I lead the mind on travels strange and far.
Weird are the many acts and deeds which I perform.

At times I kindle love, unfelt awake,
And give to lovers their first ecstasy.
(Thus do I strengthen timid man in that he fears
That he may bring to light his greater self);
Again I lead men to the door of death
When tired souls, partaking final leave,
Bid their farewells to life with all its cares,
And leave this world in calm and peaceful sleep.

Then, too, I open doors to strange adventure
Leading with silent hand the mind of man
Into some distant realm, where he may tread
The magic carpet of illusive charm,
Or ride astride some winged steed,—
Dashing through azure skies and pearly clouds.

I work at night while other powers sleep,
That I may freely carry out my will;
For I am bearer of life's strangest play.
No one can chide me, for I work alone
Heedless of any law or rigid rule.
I keep secure my secret habitat,
Giving my plan to but a single soul,—
He who, asleep, may use me for his dream.

DREAMING

I came, I saw, I thought always of one,
And I believed and hoped it must be so;
I worked, I played, I sang about that one
All the time in high places and low.

At night, when all was quiet and sound asleep,
I lost myself in dreams of her alone.
I dreamed of loyalty so strong and deep,
On waking I was with her, always so lone.

Roaming through the streets the rows of houses
Tried to tell me when and where she goes.
I see her now, as pink as many roses,
Walking daintily as she from me goes.

But I found that time ill spent by me
For these dreams proved to be untrue to me.

TILL WE'RE REUNITED

An affectionate farewell you left with me
When you vacillatingly departed
To fulfill a wish of your family!
I'll gropingly seek till we're reunited!

Stunned as I was by your decision,
I knew that it was not your own desire;
For me to feel in my heart an incision
Was a reminder of your absence for awhile!

You may just go along then forget me;
But I'll always wait for our reunion!
Without you near I cannot be carefree.
Till we're united I'll live in anticipation!

BEAUTY IN THE MARKETPLACE

Beauty, in shining robes that waft a trace
Of fragrance, mingles with the bustling throng;
She flits, a gay ghost, through the marketplace,
With dancing feet and on her lips a song.
But where the noisy merchants cry their wares
And reckon sordid gains, she may not stay;
A moment there her radiant face she bares,
Veils her bright loveliness and slips away.
Then for a space, held by that vision's spell,
The chaff'ring halts. Men raising weary eyes
Above the cruel need to buy and sell
Behold the endless glory of the skies.
 Forgotten lies the gold by greed amassed,
 For Beauty through the marketplace has passed.

BUCKLES

Put the shining buckles on
 The little shoes of modest gray;
Put the shining buckles on
 Ere you lay my love away.

You've dressed my love in nun's attire,
 Nun's attire so cold and gray;
Brighter garb would she desire
 A silken scarf, a ribbon gay.

Little feet were wont to skip
 Merrily the livelong day,
In a blithsome dance to trip,
 To a lilting measure sway.

So put the shining buckles on
 My little love who was so gay;
Put the shining buckles on
 Ere you lay my love away.

BENEATH THE CEDARS

In silence they are sleeping there
 Beneath the cedars;
The myrtle vines are creeping there
 Beneath the cedars;
While up the hill the breezes blow
And sway the grasses to and fro.
The marbles lie in mossy row
 Beneath the cedars.

They know no pain of aching heart
 Beneath the cedars;
Nor longing vain for one apart
 Beneath the cedars;
But rest serene in shaded bowers
And breathe the scent of summer flowers
And bathe in streams of April showers
 Beneath the cedars.

Soon I shall find a solace there
 Beneath the cedars;
And shed a weariness of care
 Beneath the cedars.
Soon I shall lie me down alone
And, soon forgotten, soon unknown,
Become a name upon a stone
 Beneath the cedars.

REFUGE

Only the earth is kind,
So I bury my heart in the grass
Under the shadows of the trees.
The leaves and the soil can comfort me;
The earth is kind.

The stars are far and bright and cold,
And pitiless as the heavens;
And the breath of violins is fierce with tears.
Only the soulless song of the wind,
Only the earth is kind.

LAMENT FOR STARS AND SPRING

Although I know your love is firm and true,
Eternal as the morning stars whose song
Once rang throughout the firmament, I long
To live departed dreams again with you.
But now our spring is past, and though I knew
That it must die, did not our dreams belong
Beyond the lands of night? Our love was strong,
A flame with ashless fires. But now we two
Are far apart. I know the same stars shine
Upon us now as when we watched them rain
Still, silver rays upon us both. But spring
And dreams have slipped away; you still are mine
And I must hold you fast. Let love remain;
Our spring is gone, the stars have ceased to sing.

AUTUMN TIME

The autumn time has come again,
The mellow days of fall;
When the rain drips from the kitchen eaves
And there's a blue mist over all.
Days of wonder and delight,
Time of apple picking
And harvest fields so bright.

Trees are turning yellow,
And grass a golden-brown;
Country boys all anxious to take truck into town,
Mountains hazy in the distance,
Wind a-roaring through the trees;
Whippoorwills have hushed their song now,
Folks a-dreading winter freeze.

Hollyhocks along the fences
Zinnias growing in their bed;
Autumn flowers all so glorious;
But darkening clouds overhead.
Winter just around the corner—
We can feel it in the air,
Having thoughts of recent summer
And of days that have been fair.

Possums now are in the wood-lot
Dogs are barking wildly too;
Chores at night and early morning
All to be gotten through.
Days of work and gathering darkness
But nights of happiness and fun
With merry hearts and laughter
For the autumn has begun.

ARMISTICE (1918-1934)

Armistice night and sixteen years ago:
A cold, clear moon;
A barrack window on a barren hill
To which the strains of music drift
From the Victory Dance in the town below.
Roy, Andy and Perk will not hear Taps tonight,—
They paid the price of this statesman's war.
God grant them peace where they sleep!
My thoughts are with them tonight.

Armistice night and sixteen years have sped:
The snow gently falls a cold shroud
For my heart as I blunder along.
The sound of the chimes has a bitter note;
It beats 'gainst my ears to awaken the past.
The past should be dead; we live for today.
But a memory stirs; no shadow its life is.
The snow thickens; the chimes die; I stumble on.
My thoughts rest with you who are gone tonight.

ASSOCIATIONS

A sleepy child, when play is done,
Clasps some beloved, battered toy—
A horse, a doll, a horn, a broken gun—
For comfort and defense among his dreams.

So at the end of our brief day,
We grasp at those familiar threads
Which may be strong supports for aye
Where we must travel long, perchance alone.

God grant the toys we take to sleep with us
May be the ones we need in our new home!

THE CARDINAL

A cardinal sang outside my room,
From a close-by maple tree,
His little red throat, warbled each note,
It seemed like just for me.

He threw back his head and held it high,
He felt the thrill of the sun,
As it warmed like a flame, his little red coat,
He thought it such daring fun!

So he flew away to another tree,
Till I could scarcely hear,
But his little red breast was doing its best
To tell me that spring is here.

LOVE'S TEMPLE

'Tis but a tree whose shadow falls,
Across an old time garden seat,
But it recalls and oft it will
Where we as lovers used to meet.

Where we as lovers held our breath
And heard the silence round us fall,
And at the buzzing of a bee
Hid quickly by the garden wall.

Where we alone learned of our love,
Together there unseen,
Oh, beauteous tree, whose shadow falls,
Keep our love-temple green!

THE SNOW STORM

The sky grows dark, and clouds hang low
O'er a scene now gray and cold;
And small round bits of frozen snow
Beat quick tattoo on roof and pane.

From colder haunts the north winds blow;
Tall trees their long arms wave;
Larger and softer the snowflakes grow,
And whiter the ground, so hard and cold.

Thick and fast falls the feathery snow,
Filling the air with a blinding rush,
Hiding from view the houses low,
The narrow, snowbound street, across.

Through whitening gloom, the gale roars loud,
A medley hoarse mid the swaying boughs
Of lofty trees, their heads low-bowed
To earth by the wild storm's strength.

Faster and faster, the snowflakes whirl;
Deeper and colder, o'er field and fen,
The raging storm, with swish and swirl
Buries woodland and meadow in purest white.

As night draws down her darkening veil
Over the day to cast its pall,
I hear the cold wind loudly wail
Weird chants on chimneytop and window sill.

And dimly, through my window pane,
The flying snowflakes I still can see
As they scurry along the dusky lane
And on housetops dance and fall.

Thickly they shroud each hill and dale;
Paths lie deep 'neath the drifting pile.
When night draws down her darkest veil,
A mantle of snow the earth enfolds.

GRAVITATION

What caused her roving, tender glance to linger,
which sent a surging stream of love through me?
The silken touch of each caressing finger—
retained the scents of fresh anemone.

Her open lips were ripened fruit of laughter,—
they gave my pallid cheek a blushing hue;
she left me, musing, but a moment after,
when like a graceful vision she withdrew . . .

CONQUERORS

The charging conquerors are laced with bristling spears;
for fear of their approach—stark daylight disappears.
They rummage orbs and crests—they seek the Golden Fleece:
they delve athwart the brink—to probe the Precipice . . .

It is dusk. It is war! The wind suspends his breath.
They come in streaming hordes—these Marathons of Death.
You hear the tolling sounds? The steel of terror rings!
The Eagle's nest is wrecked and shattered are his wings.

Along the trampled road, Death flings her crooked blade:
The causeway, the plateau take on a crimson shade . . .
Dismembered bodies drop in pools of slimy mud—
half-drowning in the flux of brother-mingled blood . . .

The weeping earth is decked with tattered scarlet shrouds:
A feasting table set—for rovers of the clouds.
No moonshed beam reveals Golgoth's lethal swing,—
the widowed night extends her soothing raven wing . . .

Upon the reeking dust of powdered marrowed bones,
the architects of death—erect insurgent thrones . . .
The wounded Eagle stirs . . . He brooks no long defeat;
his broken wings are healed—he claims his lofty seat.

THE HARVEST MOON

The harvest moon, in beauty bright,
Leaps high the eastern blue,
And floods the world with silv'ry light,—
As day is night, to view.—
And farmer folk, with bounteous yield,
Kept busy, gath'ring in,
Through night, can labor in the field,
The corn, sooner to bin.

VENUS

When beauty of the summer decks the land,
In time, that is the darkest, ere the dawn,
Fair Venus can be seen, so regal, grand,—
Her brightness is a marvel to gaze on!
Ascending, star of morn, the heavens high,
She comes in sight, and thrills, the one to view
The crescent, in her glory, mount the sky;
And clear the way, the sun, soon to pursue.
So insignificant, so small a thing!
One feels himself to be 'neath skies sublime,
While watching Venus as she'll onward swing,
And higher, higher, up the vast dome climb.
When day so comes, the sun, though bright, lacks pow'r
To Venus hide, for still she'll glow noon hour.

FATE

He filled his life (at
Great expense)
With loud applause and
Compliments;

But fell down like an
Empty sack
When Death crying, "Bravo!"
Slapped his back.

SCENE

In the dark alley
The rain splashed alone,
Dismal and lazy
Over the dirty stone.

Distant and gloomy,
Clouds watched overhead
The silent alley
Which the rain struck dead.

NECESSITY

A tree was crucified
Against a cross of air.
Disciple sunshine sighed
And shadows came to stare.

Yet earth refused the plea
Of Magdalene, the sky,
Knowing too well the tree
Without its cross would die.

SONNETS TO A MAGDALENE

IV

At dawn I am awakened from a dream
In which I walked and talked with you, my dear;
And as I clothe myself, I seem to hear
Your whisper calling from the sunlight's beam.
Throughout the busy day, I hug the sense
That all the loving things we did and said
Are treasured deep within your heart and head,
Alive forever in the present tense.
The night arrives, and with it, lonely hours
In which to live the lovely past again,
And anxiously construct a future; then
To dreams of you once more I yield my powers:
 And thus each solitary day is slowly passed,
 Each one more lonely than the lonely last.

VIII

I saw last night a vision of your face,
Resplendent with the youth of days of yore.
The deepening lines of evil life no more
Were there, and all your words were fair with grace.
And in the vision, come to me last night,
Your eyes met mine with steady, smiling glance;
And once again there was the old romance
About you, making all the world seem bright.
And in that dream, we found our love again,
With all the ardor that of old we knew,
When life, for us, held up a hopeful view,
And when your strength was as the strength of ten.
 If ever we should meet, in some remote tomorrow,
 I pray you show me this fair face—not evil's sorrow.

REQUEST

If endless sleep should press my eyelids close
While yet your own eyes look on beauty,
Lay not flowers upon my bier as though for my enjoyment.
Why should insensate clay receive from hands like yours such offering?—
Hands that have ever wandered searchingly for flowers
To feed my hungering soul.
No, be not as those whom death reminds of their past miserliness
And who come in haste with rich bouquets when it is too late.
Now I sense your gifts with exquisite pleasure;
In slumber, I shall need them not,
Nor heed them.

HAVEN

I have now at last found peace,
I who have drunk the wine of love and the dregs of loathing:—
I who oft have lain nightlong in a wanton swoon,
Only to feel at morn the pain of the loathing.

The ecstasies of those bought loves,
The senses thrilled by meretricious gifts bestowed—
Ah, this was sweet!
But then came the pain of the loathing.

In awe I kneel before the virgin heart's white shrine,
By strange new longings cleansed and swayed;
Unholy lusts no longer sear my soul,
No more is the pain of the loathing.

JOHN BURROUGHS

"For, lo, my own will come to me,"
 Was what John Burroughs said;
And long he lived to prove its truth
 That others may be led
To faith in work and work in faith
 "And rail no more at fate,"
For what we earn we'll surely get—
 Most surely, soon or late.
It may be good—It may be bad—
 According as we do,
But anyway it's what we earn
 And *only that* is true.
The harvest may be in this life
 Or in a life to come—
We may not like the ripened fruit—
 It may be hell for some.
I wonder is there anyone
 Can e'er so much as dream
That Burroughs could have done his work
 Except upon this theme.
Belief in justice was his faith—
 A nature lover he
Who found that nature never lies
 To one who tries to see
That joy and peace lie in such faith
 For one who holds it true
And works away through all one's life
 The best that one can do.
True nature's just—true justice good,
 And true good—God, we see.
What genuine philosophy—
 "My own will come to me."

LANGUAGE OF THE WAVES

Send your soul far over the sea,
And hear the mysteries come back to thee.
If you would know the great waves' speech,
Lean your ear upon the beach,
For the subconscious that's within thee
May be in harmony with the surging sea.

If for sadness with yourself you condole,
Seek the waves for nature's soul,
And if in tune by chance you be,
Knowledge will be spoken back to thee
Of things before you couldn't understand
On any sea or any land.

The ocean's roll means much to me,
For God himself dwells in the sea.
How, with your soul untuned with the Supreme,
Can you know the Almighty's scheme?
Still, every wave knows the secret well,
And if in tune to you 'twill tell.

Yes, God is in every rose and every flower;
In every field and every bower,
But I'm inspired when searching the main
Though my pleadings are in vain;
Still I'll stick to my old ocean
And ever study its constant motion.

DIRGE

I am still alive—
I'm sitting here.
In a moment I shall get up and move about.
The thoughts . . . there are so many of them . . .
Dull, they feel, inside
And cold and aching.
It is hard to grasp the meanings.
I only know he will not speak again
Nor laugh, nor call my name.
He is gone; cold he was . . .
Now they've taken him away.

Oh life, oh death,
Where is your pride?
That I should live
While he has died.

SATISFACTION

I love:
The trees in spring
With new small buds
And the feel of things beginning;
Sun shining on a pool
Of clear water
(The fish are like
Darts of gold);
Scarlet poppies
Swaying in the wind
On their long stems.

A flock of birds
Is flying overhead.
The swoop of their wings
Is like my heart.

SONNET: A WILD STORM RAGED

A wild storm raged. I sought the rocky shore
And there I paused to watch the angry sea.
The white-capped waves with fury seemed to roar
And thrust out ruthless, grasping hands toward me.
A mad wind screamed; the rain fell, bitter cold;
The skies grew dark, and tempests held full sway.
In fear, I reeled—my limbs seemed strangely old—
The mighty blast my trembling form did flay.
It stung my cheek; it cut—a drop of blood
Upon my hand did fall. It seared; it burned—
My terror fled; I rose from out the mud.
With heaving breast and arms outflung, I turned,
Then laughed aloud.—My blood ran swift and warm.
I stood alone, unconquered, in the storm.

SONNET: WEARY OF SLEEP

Weary of sleep, I left my tumbled bed,
My restless soul to calm ere morning light;
I followed where my dreamy fancies led
And stepped into the beauties of the night.
The whole earth slept; and, all about, the snow
A crystal blanket laid. A new moon shone
Upon a world made lovely by its glow.
A faint breeze sang, where other sounds had flown,
And, having sung, did faintly sigh, then fade.
I raised my arms—the stars pressed close to me,
And, all about my head, a brilliance made—
The wondrous answer to a silent plea.
In peace, my trembling lips I lifted up
And drank the wine of night's o'erflowing cup.

VAIN ARE LAUREL WREATHS

Vain are laurel wreaths of glory
To a querulous, morose man.
He will listen to the story
But he will never reach the van.

The bold, brave, honest workingman
Often succeeds where sages fail.
Imbue your spirit while you can
That you'll achieve something worth while.

With heart and soul, then, toil and plan,
Ever willing to try again.
Banners unfurled, crossing time's span,
Whether in sunshine or in rain.

CAST A PEBBLE ON THE WATER

Cast a pebble on the water.
Observe the increasing circles
Ever growing, growing larger;
First a splash and then some bubbles;
Soon a ripple becomes a wave.
The waves rush onward to the shore
The coral strands gently to lave,
Losing their force forevermore.

In the game of life, a wrong move
Sometimes causes a disaster.
Just one error defeat may prove
With misfortunes coming after.
Coming events, smoldering serene,
One word may set them in motion.
Around you then they may careen,
Causing sorrows and confusion.

LIGHT

One naked gleaming hour of delight,
Encircled in the shadowy arms of night.
My body stands by mute and cold,
While youth comes to my age old soul.

THE DUST

You gave me a dagger of singing steel,
Sharp, inhuman. I no longer feel
Clean rapture remembering pain.
The wound has healed again.

Another gave me silence and slow rust,
But, oh! For him my heart lies in the dust!

ANGER

Through your cold white mask I see
A tongue of flame,
Which burns your spirit crackling dry;
And turns your blood into white lead.

UNREST

You gave me wild honey and bread
A pillow of pine needles for my head
And tenderness to fill my dreams
With quiet rest.

My hunger was not fed
I only longed to lay my head
Upon his breast, who gave me dreams
Of wild unrest.

THE SONG OF STEEL
(To Nelson Eddy)

Tempered and tested
By heat and by fire,
Straw, blue or black, according
To man's desire.
Mild, medium or hard,
Whichever is needed—for
The power of my strength
To mankind I've deeded—
For his towers toward the skies,
His tunnels in the earth, and
His great age of machines
Made possible by my birth.
I have served and
I shall serve
Asking no greater pay, than
Making glorious the future
For humanity's way.

From fiery bellows
And roaring cauldrons of
Flaming infernos, dancing,
Playing their mad crescendos
Like the weird crying of strings,
Wild clanging of cymbals,
The blaring beat of drums
And ringing of timbrels,
Singing and singing
With the strength of my being, I
Lift my voice to the sky!
Thank God, I am steel!
Making dreams of the ages
Real, for
Tempered and tested
Am I!

LOVE'S INDEX

It seems so long ago;
Yet, when the warm spring breezes blow,
Through the dim vista of the shadowed years,
I see a gnarled and blossoming cherry tree.

All else is blurred;
That day the great wide world
Meant only you and me.
The tryst, the plighted troth, the kiss,
Beneath bloom-laden cherry tree.

THE BROKEN IDOL

Once on a time
When life was all attuned
To every joy
Quietly came the angel Azrael
To claim a boy.
Shattered were brightest hopes,
Darkened the day;
The fair god whom they worshipped
Turned to clay.

Since then the earth has not
Seemed fair to them,
Nor does the sun shine bright;
Even the song of bird
Holds mournful note;
Always a shadow creeps into their light.
They eat their bread in sorrow now,
Their drink is salt with tears;
And to their God of old
Both pray for strength
To meet the coming years.

LOVE'S FANTASY

O love! Thou entrancing fairy,
Pure, golden, light and airy,

Ethereal thy mystic sylph form,
Elusive as the blush of morn.

Thy gauzy, gossamer, misty wings
Transparent, evanescent, intangible things.

Ineffable, pure, dazzling white
The soft effulgence of thy soul's light;

And prismatic hues of thy varying ways
Iridescent as the rainbow's rays;

Opulent tenderness of thy effervescence
And clinging magnetism of thy spotless essence.

Celestial, golden strains of a thousand strings—
The music of thy soul born on harmony's wings.

Fabled fragrance from God's own garden of love
Permeates thy being, divine incense from above.

Thy luminous, radiant charms doth entrance
When thou thy seraph presence doth enhance.

The crystal vision of thy clarified gaze
Visions the dreams of Paradise, all its ways

Wafting thy slaves through fancy's realm
Lightly as the thistledown, with thee at the helm,

As one would enter dreamland's fantastic portals.
So dost thou guide us, entranced mortals.

POSTHUMOUS

A year ago we started life together
Commenced a garden matching rainbow hues,
Each day was spent exploring paths of nature,
And soon we found a love-tree was in bloom.

For us the peak of joy had reached its brim,
And then you left me. God called you away.

In solitude I sit and dream of you,
Fantastic thoughts shape round the little bud
I carry close beneath my heart; this babe
Is compensation for the loss of you.

He's ours—the flesh and bone of living love,
His birth will represent our goal in life.

I know you'll watch us from your silent sphere.
Help me to guide and rear him to a man.
To God please say, "Just thanks for everything;"
Maybe he'd let you whisper just this once.

I'm not afraid, but long to hear your voice . . .
To give me courage to bear our coming son.

RENDEZVOUS

Solitude brings back sweet memories,
Of a glorious night in the hills,
At dawn a voice called—I knew it was you
As well as the end of our rendezvous.

MY DREAMS

My dreams are only fireflies
Which, when a child, I caught
And placed within a covered jar
To watch the lights they brought.

I held the jar in darkness
To let my new dreams play,
But when I saw that some were dying,
I let them fly away.

My body is that covered jar,
Which tries to catch the lights;
I hold it in the densest sphere
For years and years of nights.

FOR I AM BOUND

For I am bound;
And though these shackles
 are of time and wear,
Only an infinite space, as death
Can sever all we share
With no remembrance or returning.

For I am bound;
And though our souls
Can never find themselves again
 Upon this earth—
There is a death
That will relent.

STORM

The sun is hidden out of sight
And the sky is getting black as night;
White caps are rolling toward the shore—
Out past the cove the breakers roar . . .

Let the rest of the world stay in by its fire,
But as long as the waves roll high,
I'll sing my praise with the roar of the wind—
While the King of the storm rides by!

PASTORAL

Overhead in an azure sky
Soft white clouds float dreamily by
Making shadow pictures on the nearby hill,
Clear and sweet comes the song of the
 Whippoorwill . . .

The birches bending green and cool,
Their shadows reflecting in the crystal pool . . .
A soft breeze blowing 'cross the rolling down,
Peace and quietude away from the town . . .

TWO SINGERS

He sang his song;
 Himself he gave—
A bauble in the marketplace.
They turned away
 Unsatisfied.

She sang;
 And suffered as she sang;
But gave her heart's best gift
To those who sat
 Entranced
 And deeply moved.

Yet his gift was a diamond;
 Hers a pearl.

QUIEN SABE?

Straining at the unseen cable,
Green arms pleading to be free;
Moonboat beckoning.
Who takes a reckoning,
When dreams put out to sea?

Limping, struggling, stark in the grayness;
Reeling, fainting, faltering home;
Dream of the skies
Still in the eyes—
Naked, stark, alone.

FUMES

I would that I could accept all things
With the extreme grace
Of the smoke that rises noiselessly
From my smoldering cigarette.

I would that I could return all love
With the constant warmth
Of that fire that, once ignited,
Burns so surely to the end.

I would that my friends could never forget me
Having no careless burn to remember,
Or that my friends would always remember
Having no burning pain to forget.

I would that I could burn for moments
Poised upon your lips
And give some idle comfort
Like a smoldering cigarette.

THE PEDDLER

(*To Bean*)

I'm a peddler of beauty
A poor vendor of song.
Now I'll tell you a secret,
And it won't take me long.

My poor heart is a teacup.
It is empty and thin,
But you could, if you would,
Fill it up to the brim.

I'm a peddler of beauty,
A rare vendor of song.
Now I'll sing you another,
I won't love you too long.

O'ER WAVES OF TIME

We may sail at early morn,
O'er us not a cloud to warn,
Of dark clouds that sometimes blow
O'er a peaceful rippling flow.
There may be a marvelous blue
O'er the waters that we view,
Though great waves before may roll
O'er the rocks and treacherous shoal.

We, who sail at noon of life
O'er the deep rough waves of strife,
May see a wreck along the shore,
O'er it crashing breakers roar.
Hear distressing cries of grief
O'er the reef: Please send relief,
While going down on the side,
O'er the mad and surging tide.

We who sail at evening time
O'er flood waters through decline,
May have felt the tempest blast;
O'er us billows of woes have passed
Then—found through God, love divine;
O'er rolling waves faith sublime
That steered safely through were swept
O'er a great and briny depth.

Then find gladness through life's flow,
O'er deep waters though storms blow,
If we faithfully guide the soul
O'er the rocks toward our goal.
Where love guides through the strife
O'er these stormy waves through life,
Till we're wafted on the side
O'er where there's a peaceful tide.

SHIPS IN THE NIGHT

I watch them patiently come and go.
Ships freighted with cargo
Creep the river slow
Like a great escalator, with its endless show.

Moving to and fro,
Each man burdened with daily care
Who knows his passionate hopes and despair,
Reminds me of ships with hidden cargo.

No one can penetrate the dark
That engulfs the shores of tomorrow.
Each day we embark
With hope and despair as our cargo.

DEATH

E'er before the casket in the ground,
E'er before the grass appears on the solemn mound,
Already forgotten, from memory fled
The dear one who gave us our daily bread.

Upon each tombstone I read,
"No living eyes shall see beyond the dead."
Hallowed by wind and time,
Loved ones, yours and mine.

The mysteries of life,
The meaning of earthly strife
Locked in the bosom of the dead,
These millions of years kept sacred.

YOUTH AND AGE

O, youth, the hope of every age,
Let not thy strength destruction mean;
For strength, unbridled, gallops on
In quickening pace, to ruin unseen.

Let not thy brisk, thy sprightly step
Refuse to heed the guiding posts,
Which warn of bog and sticky mire.
The posts cry out for countless hosts

Of young and old, who, wandering
In unmarked paths, confused became,
And counted morass good, sound earth.
Today, on you would be the blame.

O, thou, who long the world hast known,
Let not what has been warp thy life.
Burst through the hoops and staves that bind.
On with the battle, on with the strife!

Through youth's untired eyes, behold
The beauty of what yet will be.
Take of their faith, their trustful love,
'Twill mean new lengths of power for thee.

Count not the thundering roar of youth
A terrible and ominous noise;
'Tis but the shout of those who've found
A whole worldful of great big joys.

If common cause could link their hands,
No time for verbal bouts there'd be.
Youth, then, in age, and, age, in youth,
Would see the good that's there to see.

WHAT HAS BEEN

The solemn skies of twilight
Bring silence—to
The noisy city street;
And in the estate of the thrush,
That silence is a hush,
Devastatingly complete.

And here I am, and there you are,
Each alone and miles, yes, worlds apart.
That sound that rends
The darkening fields
As night descends—
Discernible to none save you—
Is the aching of my heart!

Yet I have no true sorrow!
Life itself is good.
Even without you
At my side it would
Be folly to say that
Life has fared me ill.

So it is that in the still
Twilight as I hurry home
And picture you—
Your work done, too—
Gazing into the darkening evening sky,
Watching the night, hearing its cry,
Comforting, content, I know
That whatever fate the
Winds may blow
For us, my dear, what has been
Will forever be, and its
Beauty shall not end!

CYNICISM

Just dream of eyes and starry skies
 And love beneath a moon;
Of heavenly bliss, and one sweet kiss
 That ended all too soon.

Bring back again the dear days when
 Life seemed to be a dream;
When one sweet girl seemed all the world—
 And not a freshman green.

MONTANA SUNSET

A flush of color in the western sky:
 Dark islands in a sea of gold;
A lovely maiden with mien so shy,
 Pursued and wooed by lover bold.

A sea that seems to drain from its isles
 Their purple dye till they make one;
A blushing maid in whose last shy smiles
 Surrender lies—and day is done.

REMINISCENCE

Refreshing as sweet April's breeze,
Delightful as spring showers,
She blew into my life to seize
My heart—in three brief hours.

Lovely, petite, she seemed to me
The quintessence of my dreams;
In those few hours I seemed to be
Enchained by love—in 'teens!

MY ANCESTRAL CHAIR

Just a little chair,
But many have rested there;
Of rush and golden maple strong,
It's stood for long
Upon the floor,
A hundred years and more;
Yet has beauty still,
And strength that will
Give rest for many a day,
Before it's laid away.

In this chair, I sit a-dreaming;
Ghosts of many o'er me leaning;
Myself, a little girl
With golden curl;
My brother, a chubby boy
With hair as bright,—and oh, such joy!
Our dad and mother, dear;
Granny with her smile and tear;
Then there is grandfather,
His mother, too, and father,
And many that I can't recall;
The Dominie and neighbors all,
And cousins, not a few,
For this family thrived and grew.

But not all who rested here
Came with heart of cheer;
There's been grief and loss to bear.
So with tenderest care
I cherish this brave, little chair
That's come down the years to me.

RIVALS

"Quiet ways are sweetest,"
Said the Stay-at-home;
"Gypsy paths are rough and far
For gentle feet to roam."

Said the Gypsy: "Laughter
In my hands I hold;
Up the world I go, lass,
Faring free and bold.

I will give you Eden,
By a slumb'rous hearth,
Where love sits a-dreaming
Of the foolish earth.

I will give you wild stars
In a blue nest,
With song o' gypsy fiddle strings
Playing to rest.

"I will give you lamplight,
And firelight dim,
With cricket flutes to pipe you
Over slumber's rim

"I've a golden penny
To match your golden hair;
It shall buy a snood for you,
Though my head go bare.

"Come unto my roof-tree,
Draw the curtains bright;
Love will waken smiling
In the firelight.

"If you dare to come, lass,
Take you then my hand;
I will lead you singing
Into Gypsy Land."

SPRING

Earth is waking from her sleep,
 For God has spoken to my garden.
Though the chill white patches still are lying
 In the hollows of the hills,
Today I found a tender iris spear;
And dull red tulip spikes
Are pointing toward the sun.

MY FRIEND
(To V. T. McB.)

If all the wise and kindly things
 You've said to me
Were piled up one above the other,
They would build a ladder
 Straight to God.

OCTOBER

A little tree in autumn,
 Standing like a torch
 Against the green of firs,
Catches at the heart . . .
So young it is,
Trembling at the edge of death.

SHADOWS ON THE WALL

I had a little garden,
A garden gay and small.
Around my little garden
Ran a rocky wall.

I found a tiny seed,
A tiny seed I found.
I hastened with all speed
To plant it in the ground.

The tiny seed just grew and grew,
Grew so strong and tall;
And now the tiny seed
Makes shadows on my wall.

VAGABOND SONG

The world is wide and the call is strong.
There's much to see, I must go along.
I'll join the geese as they pass in the night,
Winging their way in southward flight.

I'll make my camp in a mountain pass,
Drink of the spring, lie in the grass;
Sing with the stars, hum with the rain
And stay until I go on again.

Purpling dusk and rising moon,
And the crazy call of a laughing loon.
Arctic snows in northern lands,
Changing drift of desert sands.

A swaying palm beside the sea,
And the boom of the surf that calls to me.
It's only a dream—I'm a girl you see,
And the vagabond's life cannot be for me.

DARK BAYOUS

Mysterious pools are those deep bayou streams
That flow by cotton fields, aloof and strange,
Meandering on in quietude of dreams,
In charm of solitude that seeks no change
From lonely woods. So wind these waters bound
In shadows, doomed in willow banks to lie
Remote from waterfalls on mountain ground,
Or mirrored lakes whose depths reflect the sky.
Oh, never think that bayous do not flow
Because their waters are so still and dark;
April has seen these tides of silence go
Beyond their bonds to make on trees a mark
Of flood, to show where once dark bayous passed,
As rivers that must find the sea at last.

HILLSIDES

I do not question, hills,
Why you lean down to touch
The bayou and the fields.

Are you not curved to lift
A man's step, and his plow's
Deep furrow in your sand?

Are you not shaped to hold
Long shadows under pines,
Soft rain, and the hard sun?

Yet you have reached too high,
To turn from mystery
In a dark pool.

YOU POINTED TO THE SKY

Dead Allemand, out on the skyline
I'll see you pointing till I die!
Pointing! Pointing! ever upward—
Pointing to the sky.

The night was wet, and growing cold.
We knew no coat could keep you warm;
As battle packs make bitter nights
We robbed your stiffened form.

By chance we left you facing upward,
One arm pointing toward the sky.
You understood, dead German comrade,
How cold it was to die!

Each flare and gun-flash showed you pointing
In grim reminder to us all—
That screaming heavens were but waiting
To send our final call.

At dawn against the breaking day
As though in death you death defied,
We saw you clearly pointing upward
Directing those who'd died.

One of ten million soldier comrades
Who followed flags and bravely fought;
Who now might clasp the hand of friendship
Had peace not war been sought.

I hope your people's wounds are healing.
I hope your children do not cry,
Cold—comrade of the Argonne
Who pointed to the sky.

I'm glad as I watch the rising sun,
No stiffened body greets my eye;
Though, through the sight of memory,
I'll see you till I die.

BENEDICITE

If you would get close to your soul—
And closer to nature's mysteries—go to the
Sanctuary of the pines; they'll bestow God's
Holy incense and in their own language whisper
His benediction.

LIFE — DEATH

Life with its joys and its tears,
Tragedies, loves and fears,
Hath its raptures and thrills
To carry man's burdens and ills;
But *death* hath its peace!
Blessed rest—surcease—
A divine inheritance to all—
Rich, great and small.

WAR!

Envy kindled in hell
And burned to hatred—
Over which the devil fell
And vomited the hate of it.

MY GLEAMING CANDLE

My gleaming candle searches the night
Far out in the gloom the way to light—
Of a soul mayhap scarred, dragging its dross
To the shrine of hope at foot of the Cross.

A MAN

Ye fools, fast bound in creeds long antiquated,—
Who turn from pleasure with a dreary moan,
Lean jowled,—sad visaged,—self-emasculated,—
Rebuking healthy mirth with sigh and groan!

Behold a man who loves his life and lives it,
Who has no fear of what the future hides,
Who takes the good that comes to him, and gives it
In cheerfulness to all the world besides;

To whom the storms give pleasure, and the thunders,
The lightning views with admiration dumb,
Who loves the brooding night, and childlike wonders
What glories wait him in the days to come;

To whom the trees speak, and the grass and flowers,
For whom the birds sing and the winds and seas,
Who lives in love with nature's mighty powers,
In tune with all her varied harmonies;

Who loves his kind and with the glad rejoices,
Who claims as kin his fellows far and near,
Whose heart beats warm at sound of children's voices,
Who loveth home and home affections dear;

Who feels that birth and life and death succeedeth
Each one the other, in a beauteous plan,—
Who knows that his is all the good he needeth,—
Who walks rejoicing that he is a man!

CONSOLATION

I have new joys and peace undreamed of,
I have new friends that lend their part
To quiet turbulent thoughts unspoken,
They give me grace that fills my heart.

I cannot take their gold or silver,
Their constant faith in me is mine;
Such balm for a broken spirit ever,
Lifts man to higher plains divine.

Much of our dreams are yet unspoken,
They lend a charm to things we do,
Time shall crystalize their deepest meaning,
As stars shine best from deepest blue.

I cannot fail with all these blessings,
I shall win port e'en day depart,
This is an endless consolation,
Your priceless faith in me, dear heart.

SLENDER LEAFLESS TREES

The graceful slender leafless trees,
Are poised as if to dance,
The rain beats down and leaves its tears
Of crystals that entrance.

The raindrops hang like glistening jewels,
On the leafless trees whose arms
Rise heavenward, and seek that gift
Of beauty that adds charms.

Here is loveliness described,
They stand in winter's breeze,
Silhouettes of grace and form,
The slender leafless trees.

TUMBLING LEAVES

Racing, running, tumbling leaves,
Falling peaceful from the eaves.
Down the highway rolling fast,
This their measure, "Summer's past."

Red and golden, gray and brown,
Raked in piles, tumbling down.
So our lives go every day,
Rolling, tumbling, slow or gay.

As the leaves are, so are we;
Need a leader, you and me.
Racing, tumbling, rolling leaves,
Golden grain, or decayed sheaves.

AT CANDLELIGHT

Love was so sweet when first it came,
How could I know that it would break
My soul and body on a rack of torment?
I would have coaxed it with quiet entreaty
And bribed it to stay with me awhile.
I would not list to mother when she told me,
"Stay home with me, my child, at candlelight."

His lips were dear; his arms did strong enfold me.
He uttered things of fragile ecstasy.
The circlet of the moon did help to charm me.
To Heaven's gate I went with him to guide me;
And mother dear, you were not there beside me.
His love was black; and love made me defenceless.
Love was despoiled for me at candlelight.

SUMMER'S HERE

Ripening harvests. Sapphire skies.
Pools a-gleam with darting flies.
Mating birds in hidden nooks
All along the singing brooks.
Call the vesper-thrushes clear—
"Summer's here! *Summer's here!*"

REGRET

As echoes from a shore I cannot see,
Or footprints into which the wind and rain
Have pressed the dead leaves of another year,
Your errant shade returns to me again.

Softly, as you have held me in the past
And taught my lips your lawless kiss to know,
Comes memory, haunting specter at the last
To mock me in the sunset's afterglow.

Had we loved less wildly, would life's roses now,
The dewdrops on their petals changed to tears,
Lie dead in withered garlands at my feet—
Their perfume be the rue of wasted years?

With shadows lengthening in the setting sun,
My lonely heart be crying out for you—
A wraith of love, a specter from the past,
A firefly in life's summer's afterglow?

MY CHINESE DOLL

Little maid of foreign race—
 Silk clad figure; heart-shaped face;
Skin of ivory's softest hue;
 Lips like roses fresh with dew;

I bought her, and the price was paid
 (Thirty taels the silver weighed)
In her father's outstretched hand—
 'Tis the custom of the land.

I sent her in a covered chair,
 Sheltered from the rabble's stare,
(Or, perhaps, my best friend's frown)
 To my quarters in the town.

Quick to learn from all she saw—
 Quick to make my wish her law.
What a joy she was to see
 As she served my fragrant tea.

When I entered from the street
 Always she was there to greet.
Hands whose deft touch spoke of bliss.
 (Not the gross barbarian's kiss).

Evenings by the lotus pool,
 Seated on my cushioned stool,
She would play her mandolin
 (Fashioned from a serpent's skin).

While the lark from Pekin's plain
 Joined with her in sweet refrain.
Though each was a prisoned thing,
 Maid and bird had heart to sing.

Often, now, in reverie
 There will come the memory
Of the little maid so naive.
 She or I—who was the slave?

TO A CYNIC

A cynic said, "There is no such thing as love,"
The while he frowned at the blue, blue sky above—
A skeptic, a scoffer, a scorner of sentiment.
But beauty in spring is beauty heaven lent
To cupid to humble the proud and self-contained
In whom the quality of mercy is not strained.—
So when the humbling process had begun
The cynic smiled at the blue sky and the sun.

DAY DREAMS

Wouldn't you like to be free?
("Free of what?" quoth I)
Free of duty, routine and such,
Free like clouds and sky.

Questioner, listen to me;
Clouds have duties, too,
Providing showers and shadows and storm—
Beautiful work they do.

No one, nothing you name
Is free of convention or rule.
But who am I to be preaching thus?
In truth, I'm a wishing fool!

MOOD QUIESCENT

She and her little man walked by
 Deep in a Sunday afternoon.
They'd breakfasted and gone to church
 And home to papers, to dine, to nap
Deep in a Sunday afternoon
 She and her little man walked by—

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

What am I that's called a man
 Breathing, feeling, seeing?
Tell me truly, if you can,
 The purpose of my being?

You say the purpose is quite clear
 To all who want to know it:
To serve our God, our mission here,
 If we would only do it.

But how serve Him who has no need
 Of the wealth of earth we covet?
To Him all wealth is dross indeed,
 Though many of us love it.

Love supreme for God and man,
 Through service manifested,
Follows true our Maker's plan,
 For ages fully tested.

To pay to Him the debts we owe,
 We must serve our brother.
Our love for God we truly show,
 By loving one another.

Not in rites, not in creeds,
 Can we fulfill our mission;
But in love through kindly deeds,
 Bestowed without condition.

The mysteries of the life beyond,
 Our minds cannot discover;
By faith alone we struggle on,
 Supporting one another.

And then at last, when life is done,
 And He has raised the curtain,
The battle o'er, the victory won,
 Our status will be certain.

AMARANTH

Were it asked of me, this night,
To cancel all the hours of memory
From my life, save just a few,
I would strike out with swift denial
All sweetness not shared alone with you!

KAMA

You have only taken
 Your own.
What you have had
 Of me
Was not mine to give—
No other can possess
 What waits,
From beginning of time
 Into eternity,
The awakening touch
 Of its owner.

ETCHINGS

Memories like ivory etchings
Cut deep in the ebony of life;—
 A storm at sea—breaking in gray splendor.
 A dreaming, green bay at twilight—
 Waiting—still—under tropical stars.
 A tangled hillside—asleep in snow
 Beneath the crystal lighting
 Of a mad full moon—
These have cut their beauty deep:
 Three etchings on my heart.

EVEN FOR FLOWERS

Even for flowers the way of death is varied:
Stocks clinging bravely to their stem
The while grim death has taken them;
Pale, proud plumbago holding high her head:
Despite fallen petals, her spirit has not fled.
Oh! Let me not die as zinnias do,
Drooping and wilting with decay
For all the world to see
Long days before death sets them free.

TO THE TREES

When are you happiest, oh trees?
When clad in rich and luscious green
With nests of twittering birds
Between your forked branches?
Or when your form and line
In naked beauty can be seen
Through winter dusk
Against the sky?

LEAVES

Leaves, leaves—
To think we tread them underfoot
When all their glory has departed.
The tender swelling green that once they were—
A hiding place where happy birds could nest.
Think of the glorious flame and rose
To which the bold sun burned them . . .
And now—fallen and curled with despair,
We tread them down—scarce noticing them there.

RAINDROPS

Raindrops were falling;
 Sounds that were new,
Echoes were sprawling
 Where plant life grew;

Coming to nourish
 Crops that were dry
To make them flourish
 Far and high!

Raindrops were greeted,
 Welcome to fall,
For they were needed
 By one and all.

Children, there's a dash;
 Hark, while you may!
Lightning is a flash
 Quiet from play.

Mother was praying
 All through the storm.
Now she was saying,
 "Keep us from harm!"

Quiet your blunder,
 Lightning for sin;
And there is thunder
 To make strong men!

God put the lining
 Over the cloud;
Sent the sun shining—
 We were so proud!

Ask for and banks full
 Flowers we see.
Master, we're thankful.
 Praises to thee!

PEACE

Some day, some way, there'll be
A God-sent victory,
A freeing liberty from war;
Then the struggle and the strife
And the loss of human life
Shall be no more.

Then in that future day
To which we all
Do grope our way
In quest,
When peace shall reign supreme—
Ah, peace! The wondrous dream
For our rest.

All the earth doth wish to see
This coming victory,
In the future when wars cease.
Then all the world shall seem
Like an angelitic dream
Of the dawning . . . Peace, peace, peace!

BARGAIN

The mite you gave as age's fee—
Youth's glaze from off your pulchritude.
 Since I last met you, bought rich food,
Seasoning your personality.

You have invested happily.
 It is no pawn of chance's mood:
 The mite you gave as age's fee—
Youth's glaze from off your pulchritude.

While you in charity agree
 To keep your dividends bestrewed,
 Your friendship always will be wooed.
You match with mints of gold esprit
The mite you gave as age's fee.

BEAUTY

Half-literate languid eyes of multitudes
Plan to chase me, but lighting on my being,
Unless I'm formally dressed, are all for fleeing,
Uncognizant I am of many moods.
Nothing my whole exhibit ever excludes.
In hopes the world from squalor will go geeing,
I tire at men on me so disagreeing,
And urge the wise disburse my endless goods.

O artists sensible of me, show all your brothers
How I still vivify the dullest shells,
Bask in the coarse face-grooves of ageing mothers—
In looks of love my highest form there dwells.
Show how no nimbus over body smothers
My rays in eyes which sympathy impells.

BECAUSE YOU COME

Because you come to me just as you are,
Truthful, dear, without a thing to hide
And asking nothing, dearest, but my love—
A love we thought so long ago had died;

But now, dear heart, I hold you close again
And find your love far sweeter than before
And now the hand you once denied me
Comes knocking softly, sweetly at my door.

God knows I need a little sunshine.
So He sent you darling, just to light my way
And now because you come just as you are
I take you dear for what you are today . . .

A LINE TO YOU

I'm lonesome so I'll drop a line
To let you know I'm feeling fine
And I just wanted you to know
Since you've been gone I've missed you so.

I see your face in every star
And, dear, no matter where you are
My heart is always with you, dear.
At night I dream that you are here

Once more in the same old place,
The glow of moonlight on your face.
I hold you in my arms. And then
The dream is gone. Awake again—

I get my pen and start to write
Because I cannot sleep tonight.
There's nothing else I'd rather do
So, dear, I'll drop this line to you . . .

EPITHANATON

The same house, the same street, the same folks pass before the door;
The same hills bask beneath the desert sun;
The same stars mount the sky when day is done,
And yet our friend is gone, and we no more
May mingle thought with thought.—Sore
Is grief within our aching breasts that one
Who lived so well and loved so much is gone,
And we can see her face no more.

Oh, life that was so fleeting and so sweet,
So sanctified by all the ways of love,
How shall we offer up our grief?
Earth has no symbol save the ways of love.
Only the song, remembered thought and word
Are ours, friend, for life is winged as a bird.

Now one by one the yielding autumn leaves
Let go the branch, and whirling, whispering fall;
One by one frost-stricken barren trees
Lift moaning branches high above the wall.
Come year on year, and these same moaning boughs
Will one by one decay, let go and fall,
And we who mourn our loved ones gone before
Ourselves must pass for man is part of all.

Oh, dear one, you are only gone before;
Our time will come to mingle with the earth,
And who shall tell if that old tale be true,
That from our death shall rise abundant birth?
The seeds of life are hidden from our sight,
Beyond our planetary dust, behold, is light!

WINTER TIME

I tread along a lonely, lonely road,
And through the mists I keep on stepping farther.
Round me the snow is sparkling clear and white,
And little stars above speak to each other.

I tread along a snow-quilted highway;
The moon above is beautiful and round.
It cheers me on as a beloved mother,
And 'neath my feet I hear a crispy sound.

I tread along through these vast, vacant spaces,
My shadow follows, follows next to me.
I see where God accomplished His creation,
And the wind whispers, "All this is for thee."

I tread along on a deserted highway.
The moon above is beautiful and round.
Stars in heaven call out to one another,
And 'neath my feet I hear a crispy sound.

GRAND CANYON

Break not the silence that hovers above me,
Deface not the picture that I frame in my mind.
I am watching a painting as though on a canvas;
Its background and space, but no paint can I find.

I see an illusion spread over a canyon
And within it a shadow; portraying a man,
Who tries not to look about the surroundings
And covers his face with a willowy fan.

Oh, break not that mirage that hovers before me.
Destroy not its slumber; speak not, be kind.
For I am still trying to learn the reason,
Why is that man with silence confined?

QUIET LOVE

If telling could intensify
 Or would old love renew,
Then I would seek the sweetest words
 To say that I love you.

But silence is more potent
 The depth of love to show,
When understanding hearts are one
 And love is all aglow.

FIRST SONG

Who taught the first bird to sing?
 What was his first outcry?
Was it of happiness or grief
 He tried to testify?

I rather think it was of bliss
 His bubbling notes arose,
For grief is mute when deepest felt,
 Disconsolate in pose.

FIGS

The figs are ripening on the tree
 And plentiful they seem to me,
In generous groups along the stem
 Where birds will feast on most of them.

In purple, green, and yellow hues,
 Who would their sweetness then refuse?
I know I'll catch behind each leaf
 A waiting, wanton, willful thief.

UNANSWERING

Ah, something of a sigh
 Escaped the heart of spring;
I felt my own heart nigh
 With echo answering.

And then the springtime laughed:
 I waited for my heart—
But in the joy spring quaffed,
 Alas! I had no part.

REPEAT

 A note too beautiful, intense,
 Too wonderful to come
From out the feathered throat and sum
 Of one bird's happy sense!

 A note too beautiful! I wait—
 It cannot come again:
It told all springs and loves and then,
 A second note, its mate!

THOU ART MY STEADFAST LOVE

Thou art my steadfast love,
 But always there will be
New bringers of enchantment
 Which thou first gavest me.

Thou art my steadfast love—
 What if there bubbles be?
Beneath their break flows steadily
 My steadfast love for thee!

NOT TILL TODAY

Not till today have I known such joy,
Never before such longing sorrow.
Which will be mine in the years to come?
Which shall I have tomorrow?
As you have come you may go away,
But never the same for me
Will be the things that I know and feel.
As the winding river that runs to sea
Can never forget the surging might
Or return to its peaceful plain,
So is my past beyond recall.
And the joy in my heart is pain,
For the depths of the sea are quite unknown,
Yet the ocean's rollicking song is sweet.
The river eagerly rushes on.
Crush not my love beneath your feet.

THE HUNT

Awake! The hunt is nearly on.
The bugle of cold reason calls.
Awake within your silver halls
You sluggish soul, you paragon
Of easy pleasure, rosy vice,
You fattened guinea pigs and mice!
Not over meadows budding green
After fleeing fox or hare,
But justice in her hidden lair
Is sought in city by-ways mean.
Rip off your clinging robes of might!
Ride on in dazzling cloth of light,
In search of peace and end of strife
The hunt for simple, purer life.

PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH FARMER

A lad, he never saw Penn avenue
For counting sheaves: he told the length of days
Shading with nut-brown hand his steely blue
Impenetrable eyes against sun's blistering rays.

For his Dutch forebears farmed, and, so too, he
Must till the soil and stand behind the plow
Or nurse young corn,—his whole identity
Sunk in the earth like sweat drops from his brow.

The summers were no idle seasons' rife
With baffled dreams, but times of plenitude,
For earth is fructified in spring,—the wife
When winter comes and the last log is hewed—
And he knows rich content, nor prays in vain,
Though all he asks of God is blessed rain.

THAT WAS YESTERDAY

No matter that the end on brigand feet
Marches upon us down a lonely path
Banked with dead flowers, a tomblike aftermath
Of last funereal rites. Henceforth I greet
Love as a friend, though I go incomplete
And mocked by jealous Gods in idle wrath,
My cricket chirped too near an alien hearth
And song died of denial and defeat.

And it were wiser, now the end is near,
To launch new ships and valiantly set sail
Past ancient pain and permanent betrayal,
Beyond the undivinely dying here,
And to a robin, winging, bid it say
I loved you, yes, but that was yesterday.

HOME IS THE TRAVELER

Bitter black the long cold nights
Dismally drag the hours
From twilight fall to sun up
This is no land of ours . . .
The stars that glitter fitfully
In an opaque and somber sky
The sun that breaks through savagely
With a sudden harsh fall of light
This is not the northern beauty I remember.
The wind that sang such wild sweet songs
Now draws a shivering bow on untuned strings,
With cold and careful cruelty
The north wind now comes whispering.
These ghastly fields of drifted white
As graveyard mounds do seem.
These bare, rattling, tragic woods
Are but the ghosts of trees I dreamed.
Far I traveled, and wandered long
But in my soul I placed
My home upon a pedestal.
Ah, but it has been effaced
I struggled to come back alive
And my country like a jealous woman lies
Scornfully etched in black and white
Denying me recognition . . .
Even when my heart does twist
And tears come to my soul
Like a jilted woman in recompense
My home is no longer home . . .

EVENTIDE

I sit alone at eventide,
When all this world so strange and wide
Has gone to rest; when shadows fall,
The sun sinks low; night covers all.
My heart is tired, my faith is gone,
I lack the strength for fighting on,
I fear defeat, I've lost my pride,
I dread my fate at eventide.

But then, somehow, my thoughts and I
Together leap into the sky
And meet in some far cosmic height
The Master of the day and night.
Up speaks then my poor, weary soul:
"God, give me strength to reach my goal;
Let me in stress be not dismayed;
Let danger find me unafraid;
When life's long, grueling race is run
Let me be proud of what I've done;
If, as I go, I'm jeered and blamed,
Let me at least go unashamed;
I'll face defeat, if 'tis Thy plan,
But let me be, O God,—a man!"

These are the prayers that fill my mind
At eventide, and God is kind,
For having heard He soothes my soul
And gives me strength to reach my goal;
My heart is full of courage now;
'Neath fate's fell blows I will not bow,
And when the night has turned to day,
Fearless, I plunge into the fray.

THE INTERPRETERS

Who are the great interpreters of life?
The bold adventurers who search the seas
For treasure in vast reaches of the mind?
They, who see God in flowers and the stars
And hear his voice. A glorious company
Of prophets—the immortals of the race,
Who never deem a sacrifice too great
That men may live. The conquerors? Not those
Who pile up human bodies to the skies
And found their empires on a sea of blood.
What have their conflicts brought a wounded world?
Away with force that scoffs at human rights,—
Nor mercy shows. Stand back and clear the way,
Ye money grabbers who would slay for gold.
Impede not those en route from Runneymede
To write the charters of our liberties.
O, this is hallowed ground! In awe we stand.
Here lie the dead who cherished freedom's dream.
They knew no color line, and now they sleep;
With those at Gettysburg their vigils keep,
And light falls on us in a golden beam.

CAN THIS BE SHE?

Can this be she
 Who for a little while
Molded my thinking, caught my feeling in
That strong warm grasp and fused it with her own,
So that we sped through space together, one,
Among the stars, of which we were the chief;
Then swooped like a meteor, rushing, falling, yet
Fell not to earth, to chilling, quenching earth,
But hung still blazing, one, though separate.
 Now
She has spoken, a few little words, and my heart
Is spilled, and the drops are all cold, and they numb
My mind and my limbs and my eyes,
So that I stare and cannot think and cannot move,
But wonder over and over the strange sad puzzles:
Can this be She?

DREAD

The wind is sobbing
 (strangling, strangling!)
The boughs are swaying
 (ceaseless, ceaseless!)
The leaves are fluttering
 (frightened, frightened!)
My hands are quivering
 (palsied, palsied!)
My tears are starting
 (scalding, scalding!)
My soul is crouching
 (trembling, trembling!)

MEDITATION

Like lazy wingéd birds my thoughts go out
Whither I cannot go—or know the way,
Trailing rose clouds of idle wonder they
Almost can glimpse immortal gods at play.

And yet again those thoughts are piercing keen
As swift arising gulls—bright pointed pain—
That, tasting leaden clouds and steely rain,
Shivering drop back to earth again.

BREAD AND STONES

The cathedral stands in mauve and silver lace,
Golden the cross that points to distant space.
Child eyes look up and cannot glimpse afar
Eternity invested in a star;
Back to earth is turned a wistful face,
Tangible this—the mauve and silver lace.

TO A FRIEND IN NEED

To tell the truth, I feel guilty, friend,
For the little aid my hand doth lend.
By fate poor, ungifted—*how can I* mend
The wounds cruel Fates so cruelly rend!

Yet anxious, impelled, with my humble best,
I must play the host, you my guest.
I beg, for the present at least, within your turbulent breast,
Let's join our hands for a while's precarious rest.

As living matter we give births and decease,
Traversing many hoary and restless seas.
Seldom we meet with perfect ease,
While the little we do have we must forcefully squeeze.

Life is a struggling arena, whether we are conscious or not;
We must wrestle and gamble to hold our lot.
There are sunshine and clouds, gifts wholesome and rot—
They're ours, to fill the cycle of all crumbling clot.

Now, let's calmly view and tokens obey,
What course is the wisest for us mortal clay:—
Must we let passion and fashion upon our innermost prey,
While our personal temples they desolate lay?

We have friends "in word" who come and go,
Bringing doubtful solace or nearly so:
Men, hobbies, laws—from young "old" grow,
And yet, repose we do not know.

Let's then seek relief *within ourselves;*
(As for the rest come what may!)
"Not the weakling's part!" the actors say;
As brave men and women we shall play
The taxing roles of the Rising Day.

PINK ROSES

I found a rosebud pure and white
 Just peeping o'er a garden wall,
Caught like a tiny candle bright
 Against the dark fringe of night's shawl.

The wooing moon had come by night:
 And O so sweetly it had dreamed
Until it spoke from sheer delight;
 And brighter still its petals gleamed.

I heard its voice so cool and sweet,
 Lamenting to the full round moon
And telling him in accents fleet,
 That it would be full blown by noon.

He came and kissed its snowy cheek;
 The glow of his bright lips remain—
It hid behind a pansy meek
 To wash the telltale blush with rain.

But richer, deeper grew the sheen
 Until it claimed a lovely hue.
No more at night its face is seen
 Caressing little winds that woo.

For by the dim old garden wall
 It lingers now, a rose supreme,
And from the dark fringe of night's shawl
 Drifts back the fragrance of its dream.

So thus with life. When love does shine,
 It finds us timid, mild or meek,
We like to dream, unmarked, supine,
 And hide away our blushing cheek.

IN GOD'S GARDEN OF BEYOND

When we pass from this earthly life
Far beyond both struggle and strife
To meet once more our loved ones dear,
Waiting with God, our voices to hear.

'Tis God's love calling for evermore,
Drawing us near that Golden Shore,
And there within His Garden of Beyond
Our hearts so rapidly shall gladly respond.

He will welcome us one and all
Amidst His garden within the wall,
Giving His love to those so true,
Bringing me home, sweetheart, to you.

LIFE OF A COWBOY

The cowboy's work is never done
Though he rides from dawn to setting sun,
Riding along o'er hill and vale,
Cooling his brow with the passing gale.

Singing songs of the Golden West,
Dressed in chaps and buckskin vest,
Always happy, always free,
Sometimes frisky, while on a spree.

But when roundup time comes rolling round,
In the corrals he will be found,
Branding calves of colored hues,
Echoing back their mothers' moos.

And in the evening when work is done,
He will begin once more to sing and hum,
Until the night's breezes, chill and cold,
Send him to bed, his blankets to enfold.

PAVLOWA'S ELEGY

The Swan has ceased to stir the waters with her grace.
The garden lies forlorn without her nervous breathing.
We no longer watch the long quick dips
Of rhythm form upon a mirrored lake.
Void of all its beauty is the landscape
Quivering with the bodies of new birds.
The waters can no longer curl in fancy pattern
Slippered by the dancing of Pavlowa.
Through the crystal shell of life is left a slipper,
Sunken to the mossy depths of memory.

We listen to the lapping of the waters,
Playing for their dead mistress' sake;
Catching only glimmers of her shadow
On the black and desolate lake.
She has gone away before her wings grew tired,
Too tired to float in admiration's fame.
Beautiful Bird, have you gone to rest,
To lie in satin waiting, waiting for the
Encore of the dance?
We search, we call, but find in vain
No other bird who satisfies our longing.

ALL THINGS IN ONE

Poet, though we may never meet
And talk of common things unsung,
We have universal beauty
Which brings all things in one.
Though I know who and what you are
And you not e'en my name,
We have the thoughts of common things
As friendship's measured gain.

TO A ROSE

Within my hand I hold a rose
Its color, fragrance, shape appear;
And nothing in the world of flowers
To my own heart is quite so dear.

I kiss the flower and bare my head
As an unseen Presence comes to mind:
Somehow I know the rose is part
Of God himself to all mankind.

THIS HOUSE OF MINE

I live within a house of clay
Which soon must crumble and decay;
But, Oh! my house is passing fair
And how I do love living there!
No structure e'er conceived by man
Built since this good old world began
Can with my house compare!

Mine? 'Tis but a loan, this house o'er which I yearn.
From dust it came and to dust it must return.
Just as a shell, emptied of its hidden heart,
Falls worthless, having done its part.
So this clay house must crumble and decay
When I, the real I, shall take my way
To my eternal home.

THROUGH A GLASS

Distressed I think, "How restful must be death,
How sweet—a silvery flute—my last drawn breath."

With all that's sensate in a deep-toned bell
From craftsman's die to chimes, to last ripe knell,
Why fear the molder with his acid test?
Why fear the tollsman with the bell at rest?
And all of beauty in a moving tide
Why fear the shadow at the riverside?
Why fear the rising of the water's crest,
Or fear the boatman with his oar at rest?

Serene again, I say, "How far off death;"
Again, "How frosty sweet this living breath."

A LINNET'S WING

O ever pray your soul may not grow fat—
For in all men there is a something that
Will slack; take comfort of the fire and cup;
Ignore the frosty challenge of the horn
And baying hounds; ignore the early light
That like cool waters sponge the sloth of night.
O rather be the rising spark that dies
Upon the wind; the dart that sighs the moon.
For souls that through desire denied grow lean
Inherit spheres but Gods have known or seen—
Such things as pompous toss-pots, glutted, stuffed,
May never lay a mottled thought upon.

O choose to diet on a linnet's wing,
Remembering that linnets soar and sing!

THE PURITANS CAME

They were of ironwood and oak,
And they landed where the wintered Atlantic
Broke over the boulders of Cape Cod.
In the snow and the ice and the cruel wind
They gave to the world a cabin of logs
And to a wilderness a name and a future,
And from the cabin of logs a thin line of smoke emerged
And invaded strange air;
And in the winter, by the Atlantic,
In the snow and the ice and the cruel wind
They learned to dig graves—
And at night by the fire of pinelogs
Their dreams were of windmills and towns
Away in a world of the old.

ONCE IN A WINTER

Being lined with ice, each branch appeared
A glittering thing beneath the moon,
And each was quite as proud of ice
As it had ever been of bloom.

The parent root was wild with rage
To think its offspring dared be known
To put on cheap unnatural airs
With decoration not their own.

THE AVOIDED

We never spoke of it;
We talked of other things.
I never asked his name;
She never wore his rings.

BITTER SWEET

As a rainbow athwart a gloomy sky
 Strikes joy to a sorrowing heart,
So a beam of love will bring content
 And happiness impart.

When all too late we realize
 That love lies dormant—dead—
Each teardrop is a memory
 Of kind words left unsaid.

LOVE IS PEACE

"Peace on earth, good will toward men"
This chant receives the world's Amen!
But ere we hope to realize
An earthly state of Paradise,
We must attune our hearts with love
For fellowmen—for God above.

DEWDROPS

Dewdrops are the tears of flowers
Grieving for their loved ones dead—
Daisies, plucked and torn asunder,
Violets, snatched from out their bed.

Dewdrops are the fairies' nectar
Sipped each morn from perfumed cup,
While Earth's children still are sleeping,
Just before the sun is up.

I TELL YOU THAT IT BROKE

No use to comfort me;
I tell you that it broke.
That dull, dead emptiness
Where once my heart had been—
And then one day a drop of blood
Fell from my breast.
I knew it broke—
That day he died.

THE VOID

I only know that he is gone.
Idle to say he lives;
That I will see him yet.
I only know
He never smooths my cheek,
Nor calls me by my little name,
Nor tells me to be brave.
My straining ear catches no step,
Hears no laugh.
I only know that he is gone.

DEATH STAND BACK

Death, stand back; I come; I fly;
I succor him.

My arms stretch out to snatch him
From your hold.
He's mine; he lives; I bring him back
Past the dark door and into light . . .

It was not years ago; you lie.
Death, stand back, I say.

THE GOLDEN PLOVER

I saw a golden plover high,
Ride the waves, of torrent sky,
From shore to shore, and back again,
But to no avail could he once gain.

Again he tried, but weak and worn,
With his feathers ruffled and torn,
I tried to cheer him up, for flight,
But he had died, a gameless fight.

I WILL NOT TURN FROM NATURE

Oh, valleys with your rufous curls,
 How do you pass the years?
With grasses wind-swept with whirls,
 You sheen your rainy tears.

Where hemlocks sway their fringes
 In the breezes as they blow,
And the wrathful wind freezes
 The uncovered foliage in its glow.

Where sun-drenched brooklets wander,
 In the valleys where they lull,
And the mosses tightly slumber,
 As they cast their greenish hull.

With thoughts of fancied youth come near,
 As I gaze across the sky,
Where the horizon's untouched beauty veers,
 I was so young and shy.

There must be time for some to spend,
 With other thoughts of youth,
But not for me to lend a wend,
 From nature's fondness, truth.

FRAGILE AND WINGED THINGS

There have been trees who clasp their leafy arms,
Entwine soft green in delicate embrace;
Wild birds take flight and wheel at no alarms
And blackly stream across the sky's blue face.
The moonless night, the sunless dawn are such
That, inwardly, I cry: Rejoice, Rejoice!
The pale white hands of winter or the touch
Of loving woman, and her tender voice—

These have I loved full well, and full well too
The fragrant earth and azure sky and sea.
Those birds grown dark against the blue
Now periods in an endless minstrelsy.
Too much of beauty has my being known
To marry earth and be ever her own.

TONIGHT

Tonight the sunset passed into the west.
Before I knew, the dark was long begun.
The thought of you so close against my breast
Stood as a high wall blotting out the sun.
For me there was no purple in the hills.
Tonight the white snow did not turn to gray,
Tonight the darkness fell without the frills
And tortuous ending of another day.

How long will memory of loveliness be all
That I shall have on which to brood?
Will ever just a thinly fond caress
Be drink for love, and all sufficient food?
When darkness holds the world within his girth,
Let me be darkness, you the blesséd earth.

THE SUNDIAL AT NORWELL

I thank Thee, Father, for the boon of sight
Within whose range external beauty lies—
Resplendent flowers; gorgeous birds that rise
On gleaming pinions in their heavenly flight;
The mystic pageant of the shimmering night
That opens wide the gates to jeweled skies;
The dawn that comes with most exquisite dyes
To tinge the trees with opalescent light.

Without this boon I never could have seen
The priestly pines at Norwell grouped around
An opening like some great cathedral's nave,
Where, centered in a broad expanse of green,
A stone sundial warns, without a sound,
How swiftly man is marching to his grave.

THE REVELATION

I did not know that you were half so sweet
Until life's sun had faded in the west,
And starless night upreared her sable crest
As death estranged your lips and bound your feet:
Then from your room, into the shadowy street
I turned and, hopeless, fought the mad unrest
That seared my heart and all my soul oppressed
With sense of loss so utter and complete!

Your wondrous love and spiritual grace
I took for granted, for they seemed to be
As natural as the beauty of your face;
But now I know just what you meant to me:—
An inspiration mid the toil and strife
That mark this bitter struggle we call life.

IT IS MAY!

What though the skies are gray,
 And the air is dank and chill?
And the sea-mists, drifting in,
 With salt our nostrils fill?

Yet the fruit-trees are a-bloom,
 And the poplar's clad in gold;
And borders are bright with flowers
 As full as they can hold;

And the dandelion stars
 In the grass shine all day long;
And the violets are blue—
 And my heart is filled with song!
 And it's May!

COMFORT FROM THE SEA

I will go down to the wind
 And the sea;
They have nothing to say unkind
 Though forlorn I may be.

I will play with the filagree gold
 From the moon
On the breaker but half unrolled,
 To vanish in spray too soon.

I will joy in the apricot hue
 Of the sky,
Which the lake recreates anew—
 The loved in the lover's eye.

These care not if rich or poor
 I may be;
When earth slights, a welcome sure
 Awaits me beside the sea.

THE COMING NIGHT

The bay is a water of glory,
When the sunset tints the high
With its red and golden ribbons
In the blue fields of the sky.

The waters sparkle and quiver
With the radiant beauty above,
While up in the sky is the Giver
Of infinite, tender love.

The rose fades from the heavens
And darkness races with light
To cover all in a fragrant dew,
As becomes the approaching night.

THE CHARM OF A SUMMER EVENING

In the black velvet of the great, soft sky
The silver stars are twinkling.
The massive trees, their heads held high,
Drink in the dew a-sprinkling.

The green grass wet with new-felled dew,
The flowers sweet are leaving
To sleep quietly through
The charm of a summer evening.

The birds' songs now are stilled
For night's gentle hand is keeping
The reins that rule the joy
Of the charm of a summer evening.

The crickets sing for now
The happy birds are sleeping,
And silence gives way to the chorus:
The charm of a summer evening.

OLD GUILFORD TOWN

We love old Guilford Town—
Its houses pink and brown,
Its houses white and yellow
Of tints so fine and mellow!
With lordly trees of oak
Or slighter forms bespoke—
Gardens of velvet sheen
And flowers about the green—
Stone rockeries so quaint;
Bird calls both loud and faint,
And tinkling brooks here, too,
And fountains charm the view.
Here children learn and play,
Grown folks, too, every day.
Guilford, we've loved before—
We love you more and more.
Your streets have charming names,
And your religious fanes:
Masonic temple fine,
It, too, is on the line.
Apartment houses tower,
Financial troubles lower.
But though we must retire,
Guilford we yet admire!

NOVEMBER

A blue haze hangs above the hills
And in the marsh the wild ducks call;
The sun gleams pale—the north wind chills;
From tree and shrub the last leaves fall.

The drowsy river's gone to bed.
The swaying willows cease to weep;
They stand remote at foot and head
And loyally a guard they keep.

From scudding clouds the snowflakes swirl—
A scouting army—fleecy white,
O'er hill and dale in merry whirl,
They skip and dance in mad delight.

The corn is husked—the mows are full;
The cellar has a fruity smell.
The kitchen with its spicy pull
Lures,—delicious tales to tell.

And though the north winds rave without,
The glowing fire of apple wood
Puts gnawing cares and fears to rout.
Who'd miss November—if he could?

LONGING

Longing irresistible—
As hills that ever reach up to the sky,
And waning moon that seeks her western couch,
And flowers that yearn for rain and sun and dew,
A laborer for rest, and youth for God—
Longing, irresistible, for you.

A FLAME-RED PENNON

Like flame-red pennon lies your passion-love
Across the blue and gold and russet gray
And purple of my life—it does not blend,
But there it lies, a crimson plash, aglow:
This bright desire that dims all other hues.

'Twill not pluck out, nor wash away; it stays,
A flaming challenge, dear, across my days,
As unforgettable as your last kiss
Upon my lips—a pennon, crimson-red.

PHILTRE AMBROSIAL

Honey dripping from your lips on mine,
A hand as gentle as persuading breeze
Of early summer night,
A witching perfume like magnolia in the dark
Breathing seductively a subtle lure—
Philtre ambrosial.

THE ANCIENT SPELL

Down the vaulted isle the barefoot brothers come
Chanting deep and slow their ancient Latin song.
On they move within the crumbling minster dome
Black and red with crosses gold and banners long.

Steeply rise the dim cathedral walls,
Incense and carving damp the reverend tread.
Certain in faith within the columned halls
Requiems rise above the silent dead.

Oh quiet gloom, conceal my thought-sick heart,
Arrest my feet, relight my ashen breast.
Soft smoke and glass, naive and mystic art,
Shed on your quiet, spread your solemn rest.

HOBO HYMN

This life is hard on poor and low,
For thankless work is all they know.
So run, my lad, as fast you can,
The devil takes the hindmost man!

The middle is a dreary place
Devoid of honor, fame, or grace.
So run, my lad, as fast you can,
The devil takes the middle man.

Unhappy are the rich and high
For all men strain toward the sky.
So run, my lad, as fast you can,
The devil takes the foremost man!

It's well to saunter in the sun:
The devil takes the men who run.

GOD'S LIBRARY

If we would talk with God more often,
And ask of Him advice,
Joys would suppress sorrow
Sunshine would fill our hearts.

For in God's house
There are many shelves,
Filled with all sorts of books,
Each belongs to a soul.

Upon each page is a year's plan
For this particular soul;
Some books are very thick,
While others are but a page in length.

Whenever a soul shuts his door to God
And forgets to talk with Him
A blot smears the page of the year
In which he forgot to talk with God.

Some books are as white
As the lilies of the field.
Some books are so blotted that
The years are blotted out.

Will your book be blotted?
Or will it be neat and clean?
Open the door to your heart
And have a talk with God.

LOVERS' WORDS

You said, "If I were dying and you came, I would not go."
Lovers' words they were, but we believed them.
Then you grew very ill.
I went to see you—so, so sure, so confident.
Standing beside you stood triumphant death.
I faced him and I said, "Dear, please don't go—
I love you so!"
Death smiled and took you on.
"If I were dying and you came, I would not go."
Lovers' words they were, but we believed them.

GRIEF

You looked up at me from the bed,
Your forehead wrinkled in a frown.
You said, "I wish that just for me,
You'd try on your new evening gown."

That seemed a foolish thing to do.
I took your hand in mine—
"I'll wear it just for you next week
When we go out somewhere to dine."

By next week I was left alone
Without one word of warning.
You wore the silent garb of death
And I the clothes of mourning.

Worse than the pain of parting,
Or our still, cold, last caress
Is the fact I never showed you
My new evening dress.

LONELY

'Tis supper time; in well known ways
My hands start to prepare it—
But what is food—why try to eat
When you're not here to share it?

When you're at home, our simple meal
Reflects a magic flavor:
The bread takes on a golden glow,
The tea a nectar savor.

But when you're gone, a feast is dry
As earth by sun baked through—
I'd so much rather have just bread
And tea, at home, with you!

A PLEA

Oh God, here is my wounded mother-heart,
In need of comfort from Thy soothing touch:
This day an unknown phase of life appears—
I pray, let it not pain within, too much.

So long this heart has been a sheltering wharf,
Where two small boats Thou gavest me to keep
Have gaily floated on a placid sea—
Content to laugh and grow, to wake or sleep.

But now I feel a straining tug at moorings—
A restlessness to try the unfurled sails:
A ceaseless urge to chart the unmapped seas
As far off beckoning visions gladly hail.

Give me the courage of a glowing faith
At signs of this first breaking of the ties:
The knowledge that the little craft will be
Secure, beneath Thy hallowed watching eyes.

AUTUMN REVERIES

As I sit on my doorstep this evening
And lift my eyes to the hills,
I see a beautiful landscape
That brings to my mind many thrills.

I see some green pines pointing upward,
Upward toward God in the sky;
And the beautiful oaks that are crimson,
More lovely the leaves as they die.

Just over these hills is the skyline,
Above it is lovely and blue;
Beneath it are colors all blended,
Making many a different hue.

God speaks to us all in the springtime
Through the flowers and humming bees,
He speaks in the glowing summer
Through the waving of the trees.

He speaks when the summer has ended,
And when autumn comes at last
With its many glowing colors,
And when harvest time has passed.

Let's list to His voice while calling,
Let's listen for it each day.
It's a message of love always,
So let us each follow His way.

THE STORM'S WAKE

My soul in such deep sorrow
Grasps not the reason why
Our trees were doomed and crushed to earth
Which loved to touch the sky!

The lovely cut leaved maple
That stood beside the wall
Played havoc with our heart strings
As slender limbs would fall!

The avenue of lindens
Formed such a queenly row
We wonder that the storm king
Could bear to mar them so!

The elms, the birch, the maples
So wonderful in form—
Seemed all to do their bravest
Yet fell beneath the storm.

We made a funeral pyre
Of branches thrust to ground
And as the flames leaped higher
We heard a faint weird sound.

The soughing of the pine trees,
The poplars clapping hands
The whisper of our tulip trees
That came from foreign lands.

The soft hush of the maples
When twilight steals apace—
We fairly heard the quiet
That stilled and thrilled the place.

As embers turned to ashes
And ashes to the sod,
We felt our trees' rare beauty
Had reached once more to God.

YOUTH

Eager for life they come, clear-eyed and confident,
 Sweeping the skies with their banners of hope,
Proud of new wisdom to guide wingéd footsteps,
 Disdaining the levels where older ones grope.

Ever new legions a-flame with new vision,
 A vision transcending the hitherto known;
The strongest preserve it untarnished, unfading,
 And these youth eternally claims for its own.

Eager they come! How many will meet it,
 The challenge of drab, disillusioning strife,
And, truly immortal, when all here is ended
 Pass on still triumphantly eager for life?

I HEARD A LADY SIGH

As I a-strolling went at eve
 A walled old garden I passed by,
And through the wistful twilight air
 I thought I heard a lady sigh.

I could not see her yet I'm sure
 She must have been most wondrous fair,
With great blue dewdrops for her eyes
 And silken sunlight for her hair.

Though ne'er I know what caused her woe
 Behind those walls so stern and high,
For me all peace of mind has fled
 Since I did hear that lady sigh.

ETUDE GRISE

So Iseult leaning on the parapet
beheld the Cornish seas destroy their foam
along the jagged shore, and dreamed of home,
and wondered with what fortune Tristan met.

Ah, Morholt's raftered hall, the candlelight
on the dark wood, the gemmed and gleaming mail . . .
Now through what bleak and mist-hung foreign night
did Tristan pick his solitary trail?

The green close latticed by the sun and shade
where Mother's herbs were grown (O dire craft
that brewed the nectared wormwood of that draught)
O fatal ship and waves' mad serenade!

The long strong body tanned and sinewy . . .
no, nevermore her breast to that dark head.
The saffron sun subsided in the west,
she heard Marc calling
"Iseult, come to bed."

THE ANGELS DID SAY

Sparkle of stars in a cobalt sky,
(O where is the star of Bethlehem?)
Halloo of wassailers reeling by,
(And the three grave kings who sought for him?)

Flare of candles in darkened panes,
Pine shrubs budding in red and blue,—
Carols surprising surburban lanes
Like a chord forgotten but fingered anew . . .

Yet where is the Gloria flung from the skies
And the rain of light that haloed the hills?
O drowning dream of the shepherds' eyes
As the bowl of time with the deep years fills!

LEAVES AND LEAVES

Everything is covered with red and yellow leaves.
I wish you could see them, Louise.
It surely is strange—
How they fall and their colors change.
Our trail is soft with leaves of green and gray,
Covering your footprints the entire way;
Another winding, beaten path
Is deep with leaves of bright yellow;
While a chilly, brisk wind hath
Scattered them everywhere to mellow.
About the house there are leaves in vases,
And leaves pressed between books in the cases;
Some tap as they flutter to and fro—
You know I hate to see them go.

CALLING

The leaves of early fall
Stir emotions within me
And for you do call.

Their colors bring you near;
I look and listen—
It is just a remembrance here.

But I have decided one thing:
Wind, rain or shine,
To see you next spring.

LIFE IS POETRY

It's:
Age, with toil-worn hands, folded. Quietly
Viewing with clear-seeing eyes, eternity.

Youth, with its zest for living. Reaching for
the moon; singing in the sun.

The clod of sod that God made: man . . .

The Virgin Mary or Magdalene
And all the women in between.

It's:
Birth; a baby carriage.
Youth; a happy marriage.
Age; a funeral dirge.

It's:
You and I
Passing by
Heads low or high
Wondering why
We live and die.

It's:
Life's rhythm
Flowing endlessly
From birth
To—eternity.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND GOOD WILL

Begin to clean the panes of consciousness,
O Christian, heathen, Russian, Gentile, Jew
To recognize Divinity. The dew
That quenches hatred and the evil mess
That burden mortal man is not to guess
That all, Creator and Creation too,
Is God, but learn the knowledge of the few
That soul, reality, is nothing less.

This universe from proton to the whole
Is one. A plane of consciousness, the wall,
That separates Divinity from clod.
The play of God is infinite. The goal
God consciousness for actors each and all.
The soul of man is Christ the Son of God.

SMOKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK
(*Dedicated to the Wild Flower Preservation Society*)

When weary and worn in body and mind, I go
To church to recuperate. The floor of the church
Is carpeted with ferns—the maidenhair
And woodsia make beautiful designs.
The blossoms of the spotted wintergreen
And Prince's pine, pipsissewa, are bowed
In prayer; the fragrance of wood incense fills
The air. Tall cohosh candles gleaming white
Give light. The orchestra, a brook whose bed
Has stones and moss on lichen covered rocks.
The stringed instruments are fiddleheads
And briar harps. A thrush, the soloist.
Into the contribution box a red
Squirrel drops a hickory nut then kneels and folds
His hands in prayer. God must be everywhere.

APRIL

When robins build, in early spring,
And caw of crows goes drifting by,
Across the meadow, from the bogs
Comes magic music of the frogs.

'Tis then our pulses quicker beat,
As up before us loom the things
That "must be done" ere summer days
Bear down on us and cause defeat.

And then we stack our cares away,
And just enjoy another day.

INDIAN ARROWHEADS

White-capped waves around the Bay,
Leaping in your joyous play,
Many a light canoe you've borne,
Many a sail you've rudely torn.

Tell me, lovely water, pray,
When you left the shore today,
Did you lay these relics here,
Thinking that I might draw near?

Arrowheads upon the sand!
Now I hold them in my hand.
Sands of time cannot efface
Tokens of a banished race.

White-capped waves around the Bay,
Cast your arrowheads away!

IT IS NOT THE WIND . . .

It is not the wind that is cold, my dear . . .
It is the swiftness of its passing;
It is the swiftness of its massing
Of breath upon breath that is cold, my dear.

It is not your love that saddens, my dear . . .
It is the swiftness of its passing;
It is its bold, but futile massing
Of bloom upon bloom, that saddens, my dear.

Ah, it is not your love or the wind, my dear
That I blame for this urgent passing—
That I blame for this riotous massing
Of breath and bloom—for one cannot blame life, my dear!

THE DESERT AND THE FLOWER

You would give love so sweetly, simply, friend,
To one so often barren in the soul!
On rocky wastes where land is sharp and still
You'd plant a seed to make fair blossoms grow!
O gentle soul! You know not what you give . . .
No healing rain comes to this desert waste;
No lambent winds or soothing nights; only the sun—
Astringent, parching; and the nights, crystally cold!
Your lovely plant—it might not germinate!
And if it should . . . ? And if it should! Ah think,
How desolate a thing grave silence can become!
Go now, before it is too late . . . and take
Your seed, and still be kind. For who knows—
The desert yet may learn to love the flower—
That tender, mellow, golden thing—but bring
It utter ruin.

UNPREPARED

Where ever he went the answer was ever, forever no work! no work!
And the prospects of gloom his tense, proud soul began to irk.
He saw men who forbear, brows drawn in care, eyes where in fear did lurk;
And on all lips the refrain was the same: no work! no work! no work!

The day was growing, and though heavy at heart he wanted to eat.
The displays in the windows were ample with cake and bread and meat.
With watering mouth he gazed through the panes, on rain-chilled feet.
Sad! warm food so near, and nothing for him to eat! to eat! to eat!

The night was ugly with blinding fog; he longed to go home.
He was too weary, too ill, the bleak, the damp streets to roam.
But his rent was unpaid. The rain fell heavily from the black dome.
O! he was drenched to the bone, and no home! no home! no home!

"It's futile to struggle," he thought. His mind with doubts overflowed.
That hope has the power to conquer defeat, alas! He never did know it.
He neared the river—a quiver—lack of faith, like a scythe, readily mowed!
Next day, "an accident," they yawned, of the body which driftingly flowed.

SILVA

Restless, weary, heartsick and worn;
Fretted by sham, and civilized fetters;
Rebellious toward bars forged of man:
 Today I thrust open the prison-doors
 And footed the paths of wooded solitudes,
 Climbed the heights of verdant hills
 Seeking comfort in thine arms,
 O Mother Nature.

Thy mood was somber and restless,
Yet majestic and wild and free.
 Mood answered to mood,
And my puny restlessness was absorbed
 In thine.
Into thine arms thou didst take me,
 And there I found
 That which I sought—
Freedom of spirit,—fierce, wild and free.

In thee, O Woods and Winds and Wilds,
 I found kinship.
Nymphs and elusive Pan were my companions.
 O Mother Nature, I felt thy friendliness;
 I wooed thee and thou didst take me
 Into thine arms, and I knew
 I was one with thee.

SHOULDERS

They are the burden bearers, trained to lift
Millstones of care, the heavy load of grief.
Old shoulders bear these and the young ones shift
From blade to blade the load of new belief.
Some straighten at the ceremonial chant,
Some bow beneath each hardship that they meet,
Some droop and never rise; some arrogant,
Uprear a sturdy shaft against defeat.

There is the record of each strong advance,
Each trial, each uncompromising loss,
In shoulders, set, is graven a life story;
Uplifting loads a splendid heritance
From Him whose shoulders bore a bitter cross
Up Calvary to never-dying glory.

FOREST OF FONTAINEBLEAU

Here are blue skies arched over tawny
Leaves that glitter in copper light;
Branches clustered dark where brawny
Trunks rise necromantically bright.

Barbizon sleeps in a bronze embrasure,
Paneled by stately trees which toss
A garniture of burnished treasure
Down to pattern the jade-green moss.

Under the beeches sunlight pickets
The table of kings and stones defy
Arrogant shrubs out of whose thickets
Royal shadows drift proudly by.

AN UNCROWNED EMPRESS

Countess Marie Walewska,
 Napoleon's beloved little Pole,
"Favorita di favoritas,"
 His in body and soul.
In Russia's grand debacle,
 Where Moscow's ruin glows,
Petite Marie Laczinski,
 A rose blooms through the snows.

Who visits him at Elba?
 Is Marie Louise the one?
No; only Polish Walewska—
 Alexandre, Buonaparte's son.
No l'Aiglon weak, ill-omened,
 Child of fortune's fate,
A Polak stout, a Corsican,
 To rise high in the state.

In Pere Lachaise in Paris,
 Her grave unmarked, alone,
There sleeps a loyal woman,
 Who should have shared a throne.
No Malmaison nor palace,
 No niche in les Invalides,
Just her place in history—
 A mound o'ergrown with weeds.

Somewhere in great Valhalla,
 Mid conquerors of old,
Napoleon's with his legions—
 Not Josephine proud and cold.
Perchance in guerdon eternal,
 Where marriage ne'er can be,
The Emperor broods on his battles,
 Cheered only by Polish Marie.

TO HIS BLINDNESS

Not to him who sang in the shadow
of service even in the night;
nor to him who under the bright lights
taps his way home from storms that gather;
rather
to him who passes by that outstretched cup
thinking life to be all but abrupt;
living each receding day as if it matters
not that the fickle lights must fade,
tossing him not within a world strangely dim
but casting him into that darkened barricade
having never seen . . . unlike him
who sees not the glow of streets or skies,
but views far beyond the realm of his shuttered eyes.

BUILDER

His might have been the hands
of an innocent child, so sure
were they of the image they shaped—
a child with toy blocks
carefully piling one upon another
until before him stood the design
preconceived in the mold of his mind—

then angrily destroying the image
not so beautiful as others;

or, as a child heartbroken,
weeping because his work of art
crumbled beneath strong winds.

SONNET: TO MY WIFE

Shall I call love as we have known love's state
Three married years, a crescence floodtide long
Of passion, beauty, life unfurled; twain-strong
With peace like wedded doves, and bliss; relate:—
Sweet garnishment of tremulous nights that sate
With breath-ecstatic nonce: love-fever's throng
Ope passion's portals wide,—nor count it wrong
To eat love's manna at this paunchy rate?

Or else dismount, relieve Eros his charge
To woo, inebriate; and sail the barge
Of daily toil down common man's love-stream,
And wake to ebbtide: realize our dream,—
 Call love our bark that charts life's every place,
 Its haven in our baby's eyes and face.

SONNET: IN ACCENTS SUPPLICANT

In accents supplicant I pray the strain
 To free the swelling ache, the fulsome heart
 Now warm with longing, faint to assume the part
That for to clear the womb of soul and brain
Waits palpitant with joy, nor fears birth-pain:
 The bliss of serving Maker with mine art;
Removing thus, full-grown inflicted dart,
Unparturitioned else, my heart be slain.

This prelude said, may pen pursue its way
And search heart-depths: the increate beauty lay
 Revealed, far-flung in dulcet strangeness wild,
 That ages hence lives vital, nor wanes mild
 To pretty palate; music thunder-shod
 A-hymning,—e'er remain strong fare of God.

SILENCE

Silence born beneath the lofty pines,
Broken only by a wood bird's trill,
Which echoing, reechoing, declines,
Leaving silence undisturbed and still.

THE PLAINSMAN AT THE SEA

Deep thundering waters beat upon the shore.
Slowly they break this cliff
With their ever pounding rhythm;
With their steady ceaseless hammer
Deep thundering waters beat upon the shore.

Their pounding turns to throbbing
And the throbbing turns to pain;
And through the night I lie awake
And wish me home again.

AT DAWN AND DUSK

So little is remembering,
 So much is wondering why,
When one starts out upon this life
 To question and to try.

So much is now remembering,
 So little wondering why,
When one looks back across his life
 Then ceases thought, to die.

LIFE

The sands of life, they lay between
 The great unknown and the ever seen:
And we the toilers in the sands,
 Know not the pattern (till it's in our hands)
That we are making day by day.
 Thus we let life slip away,
When we could make of it what we would,—
 If we only thought we could!

MAN

I am one with the mighty ocean
 That roars with a leap and a bound;
One with the tempestuous wind
 That razes buildings to the ground.
In my being I compass the earth,
 That is sure and safe and sound.
Is it strange that if fire be added,
 That peace cannot be found?

MOMENTOUS

We live but a moment in all of our lives,
 But that moment lives on for aye.
No time, space, or any earthly place
 Can take that moment away.
For it's written on pages that cannot rub out
 In a legend we all must know;
It tells of a time in the long distant past,
 Where I with my soul did go.
Whenever the bands of earth are loosed
 And we go through the eternal door,
Then in the flash of changing events,
 We will have that moment once more.

THE LANE OF LIFE

The lane of life with narrow tread,
As once an old time sage hath said,
Leads us but to the open door
To join the friends who went before.

The lane of life continues there,
And it should cause no one despair,
For it leads to a home above
Where all is peace and joy and love.

The lane of life continues far,
Let's hope it reaches yonder star,
That now sends forth a beam of light,
That we can see when it is night.

The lane of life will never end,
A fact on which we can depend,
It leads us far above earth strife,
Which so besets this mundane life.

The lane of life out there for you
Depends upon the things you do.
Train well your mind on things of worth,
'Twill help to make a better earth.

Think deeply! Thoughts can go afar,
Perchance they'll reach some twinkling star.
Folks may live there far out of view
Who, too, are trying to reach you.

THE SECOND DEATH

Death's fiends
man casts
into a lake of fire.

Hell's fiends
man hurls
defiantly in after.

THE DESTINY OF MAN
666

O man
O beastly one
O naked one
thou art made desolate
thy flesh is burned: thou art consumed.

BABYLON

No more
the mystery of thy waters lure
no more may you mingle with the pure
no more the nations, tongues, you rule
you and yours are but dead and dying fuel.

NEW JERUSALEM

And now
the bride descends
unto her golden jeweled home
she and the Lamb alone
become the temple and the throne.

PHILOSOPHY

Joy is a migratory wing,
 Pursuing skies of blue;
But Sorrow is a bird who stays
 The whole year through.

TWILIGHT

The cows lag home to the meadow bar;
 A star gleams faintly over the hill;
And low and vibrant, from afar
 Drifts the plaint of the whippoorwill.

The curtain of night drops like a veil,
 Shutting out memory's haunting face;
And children, over their evening meal,
 Say grace.

SLUM CHILD

Her little alien face is pinched and drawn
From midnight sewing in a cheerless room
That hides from sunlight, like a human pawn
Evades the day of his impending doom.

Her blue-veined hands are fluttering birds at bay,
And death lurks in her hollow, wasted chest;
And death parades rank odor and decay—
Grim symbols of his wanton ruthlessness.

She's like a flower that the frost has nipped,
Loath to let beauty live in sordidness.

FLICKERING FLAMES

Our souls are flames that flicker
In the winds of doubt,
And glimmer in the dark of circumstance.
Blue.
Red.
White.
There comes a rude gust . . . smoke.
They are out.

A KISS

In this sweet ecstasy of oblivion
Time has ceased.
Afterwards a cold dank dawn will arise
And Time shall drag its crippled self
Through those vapors
On the crutches of *rememberance.*

FLATS

In the pale moonlight
Mocking birds were throating their happiness;
Soft breezes were loving wayside flowers;
I tore out my heart and flung it into that
Sweet world.

He did not know;
He was cursing softly;
He had hit his thumb fixing a flat.

QUERY

I wonder how 'twould be if I lay
Enwrapped in death. Would you shed a tear,
Or unthinking, perhaps, would you say,
"His love was one of another year?"

Would you think perhaps of a yearning heart
Which longed but to hold you tight;
Or would your mind fast drift apart
To another and music and a different night?

QUARREL

'Twas yesterday a rivulet
Whispered to me
In soft, lush, peaceful murmur—
But, God! How the sound stopped
(Sharp, like the breaking of an aspen twig)
At the merest sign
Of drought.

EMPTY BEAUTY

How sad
That a face
The like of which launched
A thousand ships,
Cannot launch
A single sigh.

THRENODY

Beauty was mine.
I saw it, touched it,
Felt the warmth of its caress.
"The stars in their courses hold true."
This you told me, this I knew;
I was not meant for steadfastness.

Beauty quailed before my scorn,
I saw, unknowing—yet knew,
Watched while it turned and fled.
Are the stars in their courses lonely,
Or is it given to humans only
To know the pain of beauty, dead?

QUERY

When I go down the valley
Where ultimately all must go,
I shall harbor no regret—
Yet one thing I would know:
Upon reaching the shadows
That permit of no return,
Shall I find the goddess
At whose shrine my candles burn?
Will Aurora, matchless deity,
Enter there her radiant light,
Or will it be (despairing thought!)
Just one long starless night?

MEMORY OF MRS. VAN NORDEN

Her hair was white as silver,
 Her steps were slow and frail;
Her cheeks were like white roses
 But her eyes were light and gay.

The years had given her their marks,
 Had whitened her brown hair,
Had stolen away the roses
 Her cheeks had hidden there.
But her laughing, smiling spirit
 The years had left untouched.

And so she looks at me and smiles
 As I go skipping by,
Then waves a dainty handshake,
 Before I, too, the corner fly.
For she loves us, "young 'uns"
 And she loves the things we do;
For though the years have slowed her steps—
 Her spirit is yet young.

THE WAGON OF CARE

The wagon of care rolls up the steep;
 Its wheels leave ruts in the sands,
Slowly wending its way, we see it creep
 To the top of the hill where it stands—
A silhouette on the gleaming road
 With its cargo of joy and care.
It has come to the top with its precious load,
 Without mishap or despair.
For the wagon of care rolls lightly along
 If with joy we share the load;
It will lessen our troubles as we go on
 And make pleasant the tiresome road.
 We multiply our joys by sharing them;
 Our troubles divided should be.
 Oft times we find life's brightest gem
 'Neath the wheels of adversity.

NATURE'S VIOLIN

Spanned by a wooden bridge, the stream
 Lies like a winding sheet between
The banks that make a curving bow;
 Its strings, the stream that flows below;
 And on this grand old violin
 All nature waits to listen in.

The stream goes murmuring down the glen,
 The through brakes and fern o'er moor and fen,
On stony paths it glides along;
 To sylvan hosts it sings its song.
 With music sweet, this woodland hymn
 Is played on nature's violin.

AFTER MIDNIGHT

The hours I wait for you have torn
My heart; and ecstasy lies worn
Into a silent hush of pain,
That anguish stabs to live again.

I, who measure life by you,
And measure hours by pain,
Content myself with sorrow now,
Believing dreams do not remain.

SLAVE GIRL

Gladly would I tear out my beating heart
If I could tear out love.
Let not love discover me. Where shall I hide,
Allah, who am ready for love?

My heart is torn by pain. I am beseiged.
What shall I do but surrender unto love?
He, who is stronger in me than myself;
To him will I give my love.

DORMANT

Snow lies upon the mountain peaks,
As beautiful as cold, white breasts;
Inactive in no man's embrace;—
So sleep untouched, my own white breasts.

Please, please, you must not call me cold!
I am proud, and you hurt my heart.
For underneath my breasts of snow,
Burns a volcano in my heart.

FLASH OF MOON

I saw a loveliness of which I had not dreamed—
Saw it with something deeper than my blinking eyes:
A sudden flash of moon which welled and gleamed
And yet was lane of trees beneath low-drooping skies.
A languor came upon me I had never known;
And as I heard the beat of universal heart
I seemed to know, dear love, that you were not my own
And that your charms were just of nature's mood a part.
I drifted north of stars in weaving light . . .
A cloud came over moon—I fumbled in the dew
And gladly found the old familiar earth and night.
I ran as quick as wind to you, my own, to you!

LATE SPLENDOR

The evening hours hold the lamp of day
In glowing splendor, and the ship of night
Outflings her dusky sail in amber light
And moves in glory to her slumbering bay.

The autumn fires leap to golden flame
Among the mellow wealth of harvest sheaves,
Upon the ebbing of forest leaves,
To put the galaxy of spring to shame.

You radiantly walk to glowing west
A silver diadem upon your hair,
For in your warm, caressing arms you bear
The things that you have loved—you dropped the rest.

WE TWO

Years may pass—oceans roll between;
Life may lead you in pastures green,
Me through many a changing scene,
Before we two shall meet, I ween.

Not alike the way for us may be,
Not alike the end for you and me;
Fanned by mild Zephyrus you may fare—
Wild Euroclydon may be my share.

But often when with saddened eye
I gaze upon the dark blue sky
To where the gray line meets the blue,
My deepest thoughts will be of you.

Whatever fate may to me send,
Or to what shore my way I wend,
Or where my stormy life may end,
Never shall I forget my friend.

And to the end your face I'll see,
And to the end your friend I'll be.
Surely will I ask Him for you,
Should you reach the port ere I do.

DISAPPOINTMENT

"I know that step," I said,
And listened long with eager ears;
"I know that voice," I said,
And tried to see through falling tears;
But I only saw her vacant chair,
And Memory said she was not there.

SO THIN THE LEAF

So thin the leaf between your hap and theirs
That you seem multiplied a millionfold
And now grow blind, grow deaf, grow hard, grow cold
Trying to shut out their unhelped affairs,
Not having a million hearts or arms or pairs
Of ears to listen to anguishes unrolled,
Or mine of unrevealed barbarian gold,
Or wheel or joss to speed a million prayers.

That one could turn a statue for a heart
Is too much irony! Let, rather, life
Come with his grating, million-mirrored knife
And trim it out, for still you'd have the art
To ergotize—you'd be a world-midwife,
Licensed, and not a listener apart.

WE SHALL BE KNOWN

No hiding after death—make no mistake!
There'll be no anonymity in heaven,
No bird forever singing up to seven
Clear lazy-reedy notes and then a break
In recitativo, who never yet will slake
Our thirst to count his pattern, poll-stripes, even,
Or whether he has nine wing-bars or eleven,
And never leaves his island in the lake.

There we can perch on zither-pegs and fences
And all the angels with their golden lenses
Will write in notebooks, after we are gone,
"A soul-catcher in Zion just at dawn."
And there no curious scrutiny incenses,
All being out of God's deep forest drawn.

ROADS UPLIFT

I know a road the eyes can see for miles
Across a wealth of green that brings the smiles
To those as weary of sights and sounds,
That rumble of traffic on hard surface bounds.

I welcome ribbon roads that wind around
And cross a brook where leaf and bloom are found;
Or scaling roads upon the mountainside
Near places where shy, wild things can hide.

A sense of peace and uplift greets the soul
As near to nature's God we make our goal.
The thoughts of self and stress descend
In ratio as eye and mind ascend.

THE RANCHER'S YEAR

Days measured by stock's need;
Early spring anxious time,
Pastures ridden what e'er betide,
Mothers given cake feed.

Summer round-ups and rodeos,
Branding and riding bronchos;
Cowboy riding, all exciting,
When wall-eyed steer beats the bronchos.

Fall days measure buyer's need,
Round-ups and separating,
When stock sleeps in shipping pen
And the white-face shows his breed.

ROSES IN MY GARDEN

Love enthralled me and inspired me,
Brought heart content, spurred me on;
Then fate made me desolate,
Till I found sweet solace here
Among the roses in my garden.

Love's faith and trust, potent, sustaining strength,
I thought lost, forever gone;
Those gifts divine are sparkling
In the dew
On the roses in my garden.

The smile that gave me hope, cheered me on,
I thought vanished as a dream—
That heart caress lingers yet
In the fragrance
Of the roses in my garden.

The fragile beauty I held so dear
I thought faded,—crumbled to dust;
But that loveliness lives on
In the blush
Of the roses in my garden.

Love still holds me, keeps me true
To ideals, life's finer things;
Ever brings the silent joy
Of your seeming presence here
Among the roses in my garden.

EARLY SUMMER IN THE PARK

The sky no longer looks between
The foliage of new spring green,
But light on jagged edges gleam
Bordering clusters and single leaves
That with indented shadow weaves.
A gauzy, verdant screen

Of emerald, jade and darker greens
Are trees and grass 'gainst turquoise sky—
Enchanted color scheme of dreams
That summer brings the naked eye.
The soul from brooding blackness weans
Itself to glorify.

Through wistful paths 'neath shady trees
Where breezes are scented with new leaves,
Where pigeons come to bill and coo
And hungry squirrels and sparrows, too,
One moves and day-dreams lazily
Of what has been and is to be.

Where gleeful infants, honey-sweet,
Kick in the air their pink-toed feet,
And bright dressed children sweetly clean
Are like May flowers against the green;
Where vaguely in the distant mist
The pale gray skyscrapers exist.

This park, by city bound around,
Oasis from all horrid sound,
From motor horns and clanging bell
Of trolley cars and raucous "El"
Where, through young summer, song is heard
Of robin or some other bird.

SUMMER CONCERT IN THE PARK

Now music trembles from sweet instruments,
And flowers fragrant with their myriad scents
Fill all the world, and tapering trees thrust high
Their verdant bosoms to a cloud-changing sky.
There swells within my soul a seething tide
Of anguish and of joy so much allied
I cannot face the world, nor hide.
Beauty's keen knife my flesh does flay,
Cut to the quick by such sublime display
Beyond endurance. O God! I cannot live
Knowing full well things fair are fugitive.
If fleeting life were not so beautiful,
Then I could die and quietly annul
Without regret this vagrant vision. And yet—
A sun would never rise which never set.
If these things I remember, could death forget?

WHAT THOUGHTS I THINK

What thoughts I think the world can never know,
And I shall never fully grasp your mind.
Nor can I quite distinguish friend from foe,
Since motives good may lead to acts unkind.
Icebergs that harmless float before the bow
Of some fair ship are cleverly designed
To fool unwary captains. Therefore I go
In darkness, dim-eyed among the partly blind.

STEPPING STONES

A new day is begun;
 While a new song is sung,
It's melody far flung:
 And a new friend is won.

A new sun in the sky;
 A new love passed by,
While a flower so shy
 Bowed as the breezes swept by.

Each one a stepping stone:
 Each one some love has shown.
Each one a friend, unknown,
 Has something to atone.

MORNING

Have you ever arisen
 Early in the morning
To get a glimpse of day
 When it is a-borning?

And as you stroll along
 Down the so quiet street
Listening to the echoes
 Rising from your pounding feet,

Glancing at the houses
 As you quietly pass along,
Wondering what's beyond windows
 With their shades all so tightly drawn;

Seeing morning's beauty,
 Filling you with delight,
Hold a little pity for those
 Who live only for the night.

TROUBLE

Did you tackle the trouble that came your way,
With a heart and mind that were cheerful?
Did you turn on your trouble the light of day,
Or did you become more fearful?

Did the trouble that came, weigh an ounce or ton?
Which one of the two did you make it?
Oh! It's not your trouble that's heavy, my son,
But the manner in which you take it.

TRUE WORTH

True worth is in being, not in seeming,
For seeming is but the shell,
True worth is in doing, not in dreaming,
For dreaming will not propel.

There's nothing so Godlike as goodness,
So becoming to age and to youth,
There's nothing so kingly as kindness,
There's nothing so royal as truth.

A PRAYER

I do not ask a truce,
With life's unceasing pain,
Nor do I yet complain,
Nor do I make excuse.

But in the world's discord,
I pray the power to gain,
The courage to maintain,
The fight tomorrow, Lord.

TWILIGHT IN THE TONTO

Once more I stand in twilight dim
 Upon the red-rock high,
Where bowl of desert lifts her rim
 To meet the dome of sky.
Now spirits of this mystic land
 Wave wide their magic rods
To set the pieces of the stage;
 The playground of the gods.

What wild confusion—mesas high,
 Scarred by a thousand seams
Of gorges, cut in patterns weird;
 A fairyland of dreams.
Reaching for league on league,
 This basin wild and strange,
To where the Mazatzal lifts up
 Her barren mountain range.

A mist from out the canyon's depth
 Creeps o'er the Tonto's face;
The smoke of specter campfires
 Of a long since vanished race.
While over all, the sinking sun
 In coloring untold,
Paints, like some rare old tapestry,
 In purple, red, and gold.

Here mesas light, there valleys dark;
 Mosaics bold, serene,
That ever move and ever change
 As the Master shifts the scene.
Bright flashes on a canyon wall
 Flare up and fade away;
The gods are playing checkers
 On this board of night and day.

MUSING

Musing, I wait and let the time drift by,
Watching the waving cedars against the sky.
Beyond them, blue and fleecy clouds of white;
Around me the grassy green, and golden sunlight.

The warm wind goes by, leaving a caress,
Whispering and breathing a secret of happiness.
It leaves me, hunting and sighing down the hill,
And finds its way to the old watermill.

The balmy perfumed fragrance of the air
Drowses about me without a care.
Lazily, falling on silvered wings,
A butterfly floats by, telling intimate things.

THE WEST WIND WHISPERED LOW

And the west wind whispered low . . .
But what it said, I did not know.
Only the stars and wise sea understood—
Only they and the leaves in the wood.

And the west wind whispered low . . .
And I wondered where it wanted to go.
But only the sky and the clouds learned—
Only they and the golden sun that burned.

And the west wind whispered low . . .
I listened to the sighings soft and slow;
Then I wanted to find the stars and sea
For they and the wood and clouds could tell me.

CRUTCHES AND A HARP

Poor Paul, against the garden trellis leaning,
The sunset shadows glooming his dark eyes,
Whose yellow depths somehow elude sad brooding
As though he saw the orb again arise;
Poor Paul, where shadows home, a silhouette against the lattice sharp,
The dusklight wields a strange transfiguration:
Paul's yellow crutches seem to form a harp.
How strange a crutch should call to mind a harp!

Poor Paul, where goldenrod and marigold gleam yellow
And Indian paint-brush rises, flaming red,
Where all the twilight air is hushed with perfume,
For roses trail the arbor o'er his head;
Poor Paul, where beauty homes, a silhouette against the lattice sharp,
His ivory fingers stretched upon the trellis—
Fragile, ghostlike—seem to play a harp.
How strange that ugly crutches should bring to mind a harp!

Dear Paul, whose eyes can see beyond the shadow—
Their tragic depths gleam gold with thoughts that pass
As April sun, between the April showers,
Sheens a moment o'er the new-sprung grass;
Dear Paul, where triumph homes, a shining soul against the shadows sharp,
A crutch is not so dull, so drab a comrade
When dusklight's magic brings a singing harp.
Paul's soul must hear the music of the harp!

INSPIRATION

In the beauties of nature
I find my courage to carry on.
Yonder mountain,
Towering upward to the sky,
Bids me look up and climb
If I would win.

The birds would teach me
Keep a cheerful heart;
They sing in the rain.
Why should I lose faith
And falter by the way
Though the day be dark?

But most of all
I find my help
In the handclasp of a friend;
There's a certain power within
When I hold the hand
Of one who cares.

MEMORIES

Your memories spread joyous wings,
If they are made of happy things;
But a memory of some past wreck—
Is just a swift pain in the neck.

SELF-CONTROL

Keep the brakes of commonsense
 Constantly relined;
Then no threatened consequence
 Ever wrecks your mind.

WHEN YOU ARE GONE

When you are gone I shall not weep,
But gloriously I shall reap
The whirlwind which we sow today;
I know full well you cannot stay,
For you have promises to keep.

I dread the time when I must pay
Love's price and go my lonely way,
Along the road where ghosts will creep,
 When you are gone.

Yet must no crimson words betray
This secret fear: See? I am gay;
You kiss me and my senses leap;
Tonight, upon my breast you sleep;
I have known heaven—come what may—
 When you are gone!

HUMBLE HOUSE

'Tis a humble house perhaps,
To the one who passes by;
But through its doors and up its steps,
Our loved ones pass, and try
To make this humble house a home
Where faith and love and truth abide.

THE PLAN OF THE AGES

He came to the garden alone
To pray to the Father above
That the cup might be taken from him,
That he need not be nailed to the cross.

And he said as we too add in asking,
"Not my will but thine shall be done."
But the plan of the ages decreed it,
And the cruel crucifixion was done.

COURAGE

Never lose your courage
Though the way seems rough;
Never lose your courage
Though the going may seem tough.

For when you've lost your courage,
You have lost the force
To overcome the obstacle,
That's loomed up front perforce.

TO A LOVER

Shadow that I almost fathom,
As you lean, bright lips apart,
What white flower glistens waxen
There behind your avid heart?

You would cry us grown immortal,
Caught and blown as shades are blown;
I stand plucking lethal petals
One by one.

RUNNER TO DAWN

Silent hour,
Mirror to the naked mind,
Lake wherein my fancy with a flower
Behind her ear must look to find
Herself; endower
Of swan
With shadow: once again I gaze
In your windless deep, and the raucous world is gone,
And I am a runner through river-haze
To dawn.

GO WARY

Lover, with limpid, purling tongue,
Believer implicit, who will not halt
Declaring beauty is without fault,
Beware your bright perfection.

Go wary through your fragrant spring:
Something there, once trod upon
Will coil, and in some flawless dawn
Still your dancing with one sting.

PEARLS OR JADE?

Many the pleasures I have missed:
Too long my lips have been unkissed;
Much, my friend I have learned from you:
Where there is tax, there is revenue.

Twice-told tales sometimes grow stale,
Sweetheart cheeks grow wan and pale;
The fairest flower fades too soon,
When Venus is shadowed by the moon.

Pearls there are that bring a price,
Half pearls sell within a thrice;
And glittering diamonds' values fade,
To a connoisseur who knows his—Jade.

AM I A REBEL?

Am I a rebel, if individual need
Will not accept cant and dogmatic creed?
Who dares tell me where I'll find God?
In archaic church where worshippers nod?
I find Him where men seldom look,
Out in the meadow by a rippling brook:
In the song of a bird, the hum of a bee,
In the foaming scud of a wind-swept sea:
In serrated mountain made by His hand,
In seasonal miracle of fecund land:
In the mystery of moon and star-gemmed night,
In the heat of the sun's life-giving light:
In the wimpled blue of a breeze-kissed lake,
In the dank of the marsh and wild rice brake:
Deep in the forest where tall trees part,
Or, perhaps I find Him in a friendly heart.

MARCHING ON

By hand of saint o'er hill and dell,
The light of truth is being borne.
In spite of all the powers of hell,
The hosts of God are marching on.

On every fair and distant shore
The Christian warrior lifts his shield,
And plants the word of heavenly lore,
And claims by faith, for God, the field.

The alphabets of heathen lips
Are forming now the words of love;
While God's great truth, the conscience grips,
And points the heart to worlds above.

The Christ of Galilee who said,
"To all the world my Gospel preach,"
Is living now—was never dead—
And bids us still that goal to reach.

And so we shout our battle song:
"The hosts of God are marching on!"
Marching too, in phalanx strong,
Marching! Marching! Marching on!

IN GOLDEN GATE PARK

Beneath the pines, enlaced in somber green,
The rhododendrons burst within the gloom;
Bound in the fog the billows roar and roll;
The sun is dark behind the western screen.
O, when shall beauty break in lustrous bloom?
O, when shall happiness awake the soul?

Once the narcotic rose was turned to gold,
The sunset purple wandered in the breeze,
The glowing fountain spurted to the sky;
Yet when the eucalyptus shade was cold
To strident peacocks squalling in the trees,
These were no lonelier than you and I.

Now fret the white sea horses at the urge
Of frantic winds and rise as fogs arise
To plunge through eucalyptus wild and pale
With tossing misty manes above the surge,
Great wraiths that streaming pass with hidden eyes
While you and I embrace behind the veil.

Those pale ghost horses running from the ocean,
Lashed by the foam and driven by the breeze,
But reinless fleeting ever without guide,
Swept ever by the waves' tempestuous motion,
Shake their wild locks between the cedar trees,
And on their mad wings only gods may ride!

OLD AGE

Onward
Time! While dust clings
To man and old age raves—
Sweet dreams shall guard their graves
Like effigies of
Lost youth.

DEAD LEAVES

Awake
And sense the feel
Of worms that crawl and coil
Through ye who sleep in soil—
Fear not, for I
Jeer not.

MEMORY

Partake
Of joys that glad
Young boys' laughter brings
As years pull your heartstrings
With frozen eyes
Of youth.

LONESOMENESS

Night comes
Engulfing me
In hot tears none too few,
While a moon filters through
With fragile light
Of love.

THE GRAND CANYON

I who have never seen:
The canyon with its purple screen,
Seems like some enchanted land
Where its temples forever stand.

Who were its people who carved on the wall
Pictures that the mind enthrall,
The plumed serpent that twists and twines
In long ever-encircling lines.

Pictures of gods who in the long ago
Ruled the men in the canyon so,
Legends are still floating over the rim
Like specters from the past now dim.

Who were these men of the long ago,
Who traversed this land to and fro?
Perhaps the river dashing along
Is murmuring the secret in its song.

THE INDIAN BLANKET

The Indian blanket lifts its head
And shows its colors from afar,
With gold and brown and flaming red
Like patches of strange living fire.

'Twas sent 'tis said, to answer prayer
Of an Indian child long ago,
The Great Spirit planted it there
As the night wind whispered low.

As it brought peace to the heart of a child
Who was lost in the wilderness then,
We find it still growing wild
Bringing joy to the children of men.

GYPSY TRAIL

To start out on a gypsy trail—
That's what I long to do.
Though I've never told a soul
I'll tell it now to you.
I have a ceaseless longing
When the day is done,
To start my footsteps wandering
Toward the setting sun.
With clothes just ordinary
So people will not stare,
A piece or two of silver
In my pocket hiding there.
Some trinket I would carry
From a yesteryear—
To bring back dreams and memories,
Keep me in good cheer.

I long for gay adventure,
The unusual to do.
I want to see and learn things
For a year or two.
My gypsy blood is calling
For me to come and look;
See for myself the things I've read
In many, many books.
If the trail be very long
Oh well,—what of that?
Perhaps I'll find a place to rest
Where some old hermit sat.
If the road winds round and round,
The hill a mountain seems—
I know that when I reach the top
I'll see a world undreamed.

THEN AND NOW

I walk the earth with humble, reverent feet
Where once with pride uncomprehendingly I trod!
There is so much of beauty everywhere,
So much of good in human hearts, so much revealing God!

I see the beauty of earth's streams and flowers,
The wonder thrill of things when rosy dawn unbars—
Sunset, moonrise far flung on sea or hill
And then the everlasting magic of the stars!

I know the good that bides in human hearts
Despite the tests and trials of life that can arise—
The valiant heart that will not know defeat,
The soul that soars unto sublime self sacrifice!

I walk the earth with humble, reverent feet
Where once with pride uncomprehendingly I trod;
There is so much of beauty everywhere,
So much of good in human hearts, so much revealing God!

DUNE DREAMS

High dunes of tawny sands—
Soft and immaculate,
Ever moving, drifting, shifting—
Whispering sibilant communications
Of the ancient sea and land!
I rest in your warm hollows
And try to understand—
Dreaming, dreaming,
Ever trying to become
One with you, and with your
Ancient untold mysteries.

EASTER DAWN

Myriad filmy starflakes
Falling through the gloom,
Sprinkle mirky pathways
Leading to His tomb.

Day god softly creeping
Up the rim of night;
Holy women hasting
To make His burial right.

Incense, linens, ointments,
Priceless, costly, rare,
Blent with holy longing
To find Him sleeping there.

Empty tomb! loose windings!
Angels there instead!
"Weep not, He is risen;
Risen as He said."

DAYBREAK

Waking birds a-twitter
Screened among the leaves;
Stardust film a-glitter
Trembling in the breeze.

Panoply of glory
Flung across the sky!
Why so brief the story?
Tabor answers why.

WAYFARER

Love me, for I too
Grope in dark confusion.
Together we create
Some semblance of illusion.

Let me lean on you . . .
Exchanging strength for strength.
Two to cast a shadow
Gives width to the length.

Love me, lest I die
Unlived, unloved flesh and bone.
Death would be a bitter peace
Journeying alone.

CONTEMPORARY PARTICLE

I am blown by many winds;
Buffeted by fate—
Ruled by a rigid destiny
I cannot placate.

Storms may whip my body;
Sunshine beat my brow.
Past is past, the future vague.
I am a part of now.

I: adrift 'twixt heaven—hell;
Throttled fear and meager hope.
Thirsting on a salty sea,
Drifting on my anchor's rope.

What is gone, is gone forever.
What may be—may be.
Continuity is not concerned
With the small arrogance of me.

TRAGIC DEATHS

What terrible heartaches doth call to memory
The spectacle of Keats, beside a slumberous sea,
Coughing his life out upon the shores of Italy.
What sadness creeps o'er me so wistfully,
As I see Shelley's body tossed about by a raging sea.
Why must it be, oh Powers on high,
That such glorious men should so wretchedly die?
Socrates, the hemlock calmly drinking;
Bruno's fire-seared limbs fastly sinking;
Chatterton, in his priceless youth,
Taking his life with gusto forsooth.
Eschylus, writer of tragedy superb!
Killed by a rock, dropt by a bird.
Li Po, o'er the banks of a river gleaming,
Attempted the moon's reflection beaming,
To clasp to his bosom heaving,
And drowned because 'mong his manifold abilities,
He lacked the ability to swim the seas.
Caesar stabbed by a maniac mob,
That howled in glee to the last heart-throb.
Poe, poet of beauteous flutters,
Found dying in a city's gutters.
Nietzsche, thinker of thoughts inane,
Toppled into his grave, incurably insane.

DOGWOOD IN SPRING

On wings of silence, beauty's joys pervade
Where crouching dogwood spreads like virgin snow
And drinks the holiness of woodland shade,
Speaking a purity no sinful heart can know.
Each tender ivory bloom looks up to God
In gratitude, while playful sunbeams peep
Where leafy branches gently sway and nod;
All earthly nature has a tryst to keep.
The zephyrs spread a fragrance through the air;
Migrating birds must pause to add their songs
And bathe in wondrous pleasure. Everywhere
Enchantment beckons while the day prolongs.
The artists paint, the poets muse and write;
Here lovers linger with the moon at night.

LOG CABIN SCHOOL

This is hallowed ground that memory keeps:
Here dreams and fantasies of childhood bloomed;
This cabin school, brought low by time, now sleeps
Where pines bemoan in plaintive song. Ungroomed,
A peaceful thicket stands in silent guard.
This cottonwood that shared in childish play,
Now broods its plight; this sedge conceals the yard
That graced these outer logs. Each newborn day
Once brought its share of animated joy.
The years that spread their coats of grayish dross
On memory's canopy, are futile to destroy
Or blur these vivid scenes, or mar the gloss.
Within the breast are images, unfeigned,
That every wave of life shall leave unstained.

ON ORCHARD HILL

The grasses sing on Orchard Hill
A sad and lonesome strain.
They learned it from my breaking heart
That called your name in vain.

The blossoms stand on Orchard Hill
So pale in sun and rain.
They faded from the tears that fell
From eyes closed tight in pain.

The trees still wave on Orchard Hill
Their arms outstretched remain.
They bent to touch me when I knew
You would not come again.

TREE VANITY

I did not know that trees were vain
Or liked to primp as we
Until the day I came upon
A tall green maple tree.

It stood upon a sunny bank,
And bound by grassy ring
Below there lay surprisingly
A shining little spring.

The lovely maid in pale green gown
Had placed her mirror there
So that she might the better use
Both hands to dress her hair.

DESIRE

My heart is yearning for the things I love—
Dark hills that lean against an autumn night,
Cool winds that sweep from balsams up above
Bringing me fragrance in their wayward flight.
I long to see a sudden rush of stars
Lie pictured in the river's quiet bed.
I long to lose the sound of motor cars
And see a buck with lifted, antlered head.

There is a call that comes with autumn fires
And with the timid flight of early snow,
Something that brings to life the old desires
That make me yearn for beauty that I know.
Far hills and rivers seem to beckon me
To come to them and find serenity.

IMAGE TO PYGMALION

I was not made to be a living stone
Conscious of life—without the power to live.
Cannot you use your power, Pygmalion,
To free me from this stone—to make me give?
Your sobs and prayers can never reach my heart.
Do you not know that love will stay away
Unless you make me feel the greater part
Of living is to serve you day by day?

To bring me flowers, to grovel at my feet,
To set me on a pedestal, to sigh,
To worship what you think I am is sweet,
But none of these can wake my answering cry.
Oh come and warm me with your great desire!
Then love will strike from stone—exultant fire!

WOMAN

When they brought bread,
Trudging wearily through the splintered door,
Their sandals heavy with dust,
She only sighed.

Sitting alone in the cricket-shuttled dark of the early fall,
With the moon, like a splash of water, smoothing the floor
And scooping out shadowed places, still was she mute.

When the thin child,
Weary of cruel playtime, died in her arms,
She folded the half-made frock and
Put it away.

But, with the gnawing cold of the winter softened to spring,
And the sudden shade of the tree that had made gaunt lines
Like the lines on her face, she wept. The tears came.

JOSEPH THE ESPOUSED OF MARY

Now the kettle bells and carolers are silent;
The candle wicks are snuffed;
The wreaths are dead;
But I carry in my heart the humble vision
Of Mary prone upon her stable bed.

Within her arm she holds the tender infant;
Flesh of her flesh
But not kind Joseph's child.
How will he live beside the maid and bear it?
And will he keep the virgin undefiled?

The child is his to nurture and to care for;
The child is his to love but not to claim;
The child whose birth was heralded by an angel
And to whom the angel gave a name.

Did he live in awe of what she told him?
Did he ever doubt the strange tale true?
As the maid was chosen by Jehovah,
Courageous Joseph was chosen too.

WHEN LOVE LAY DYING

When Love lay dying
I prayed aloud,
I wrung my hands,
Tears blurred my eyes;
But God in heaven heard me not!

The wounds of Love were deep and sore,
He lifted up his head no more;
And there he lay, and there knelt I,
While all our hopes went trooping by;
But God in heaven heard me not!

APPLE WOOD

I'm burning apple wood today,
In my kitchen range.

Wood of apple trees in whose veins
The sap ran riotously in spring,
Bourgeoning into bloom
To crown the day with beauty.

Wood of apple tree upon whose topmost twig
A bird sat tilting in the sun
And poured his little heart in song.

Wood of apple trees among whose leaves
The wind went whispering—
And on whose boughs in autumn time
Hung crimson globes of fruit,
Within whose rosy rinds were bound
The connotations of the year.

Still sings the sap,
To lowlier uses bent.
I'm burning apple wood today,
In my kitchen range.

AFTER ITS KIND

Not that the lines I write inspire mankind,
Not to win plaudits, no, nor love nor blame,
Not with immortals there myself to find,
Nor—gone beyond—to leave an envied name.

The jungle whelps its jaguar, 'tis its law,
Anemones bloom upward from the dust,
The earth builds mountains, seas the torrents draw,
Skylarks will sing! And I write.—Write I must!

UNREST

My soul would drive with mad, fierce winds tonight,
The winds that know no prisoning nor stay,
Rash in their bold and brave unchallenged might,
Flinging themselves away, away, away;
Hurtling audacious into frozen mist,
Then with caught breath, reeling to sky-swept height
Where, insolent are by the lightnings kissed,
While scattering clouds flee fast in bitter fright.
So would my soul defy all law and form,
And with the winds, ride wild upon the storm.

NACHTMUSIK

She lay like cherry petals on the grass,
Letting our idle conversations pass;
She took no part but by her presence lent
A feeling to our group of rich content,
Wisdom and graciousness. We felt that here
Serenity and beauty dwelt. Even the deer
Came from the shadowy park and folded near,
Untroubled by our voices as we spoke.
At last the feeling of enchantment broke,
But seeing her unmoving we delayed
Until some harsh tone of our words dismayed
The deer, and they like candle-shadows fled.
We also rose, with casual talk of bed,
And then we saw that she was lying dead.

OBLIGATO FOR YOUTHFUL SOLITUDE

Let me die as a bright green-golden blade
Cut by a squirrel's sharp, capricious teeth
Away from the firm supporting stem beneath
And flung with chattering vacuity. Never to fade,
But fall as a new leaf falls, out of the crowd,
Pirouetting a moment in one brief shaft of sun,
Causing a bright gleam for a moment, maybe,
Suddenly swooping toward death, all dancing done,
Settling to soft obscurity of shadow by a stone
Into the mold of others, forgotten, alone.

TO A PLUM TREE

Oh tree with scented blossoms
 Raise your long arms in the air.
You're like a lovely lady
 With white flowers in her hair.

And when the wind blows gently
 There's a shower all around
Of dainty little petals
 Dropping softly to the ground.

I saw you in the moonlight
 Like a wonderful bouquet.
"Oh, thank God for such beauty,"
 Was the prayer you made me say.

MY PLACE

I cannot sense how vast this world
 How fathomless the sea,
But I can know without a doubt
 Your boundless love for me.

The light of stars comes from afar,
 It travels on for aye;
So always for me shine your eyes,
 And full of love are they.

Then what care I for vast domains
 Or mysteries of space?
When I am close beside you, dear,
 I'm in my rightful place.

TO MY FRIEND

The many tender thoughtful things
You do for me, and say to me!
They make all loneliness take wings
Whene'er I dream them o'er and o'er!

The wonderfully lovely things
You choose for me, oh just for me!
Like music sweet in my heart sings
The memory forevermore!

The happy days in wind and sun
You spend with me, in harmony!
They make a friendship, well begun,
A treasure for eternity!

My dear one, when the sun is low
Still sing to me, and bring to me
Your lovely thoughts, that make me know
How sweet a friendship true can be!

IF

If I were a sunbeam
 One shining little ray,
I'd nestle in your hair, dear;
 You could not say me nay!

If I were a snowflake,
 I'd touch your cheek to see
The soft, fresh sweetness of it,
 Then melt in ecstasy!

If I were a rosebud,
 I'd bring you fragrance new;
But I'd rather be a little song,
 Within the heart of you!

STARLIGHT

Like tiny lamps
Swung o'er the city of a thousand lights
The stars hang down. So close
I could almost touch them
If I would . . .
If I could but gather in a handful . . .
A handful of lovely, shining bliss,
I would count the motion well spent,
And like the miser, greedy o'er his store,
I would count and recount them o'er,
Till on the strength of their shining beauty
I would rise . . .
Rise above the sordid sorrow of this life,
Above the heartaches and the days of strife,
Into that realm of long gone bliss
That I once found in someone's kiss,
When on just such nights as these
We roamed in ecstasy among the stars
And the light in our eyes rivaled that of theirs.
Like tiny lamps
Swung o'er the city of a thousand lights
The stars hang down. So close
I could almost touch them
If I would . . . Ah, if I could!

FIRST WEEK NOVITIATE

She bends her fear-flecked eyes to meet the image.
Ave Maria!
Her trembling fingers waver through the tale of beads,
faster, faster, scrambling to relief in prayer.

In her narrow cell, hate paints the walls
a barren black. Fear is her coverlet,
shame her pillow. Was it for this longing,
like keen hunger in her bowels
now that all brightness lives in a forbidden past
she left her father's house to espouse her lord?
Seventeen is young and filled with music,
overflowing with laughter. In her father's house
there is dancing; there is thanksgiving; joy.
Here in the mansion of the lord, thanksgiving
is brazen defiance of joy; music is funereal praise.

Prayers retched forth from unwilling lips
bring closer the sin of lies, betray her father's
joy in her union with the lord. She shudders
in espoused blackness. She weeps to the death-white pillow.
Ave Maria! Seventeen is so young to die.

A PRAYER

Oh God, I pray that I can do
Just something for my fellowman.
Give me power to be good and true.
I want to live in my mother's land,
 That home above.
Dear Lord, I do not fear death's call.
I know I shall not die;
But I shall rest until you call
To take your child, bye and bye,
 To that home above.
When I shall cross that chilly tide,
Oh God, I pray that You will be
Just standing there on the other side
To direct, and let me quietly see
 That home above.

SUN

Out over the eastern hills they gaze;
Nature speaks for Him to rise.
Nothing more beautiful in all the days
With eyes to the skies, the skies.

From straight up above, He beams in play;
Behind a midday pillar, He hides.
What's prettier when clouds don't stay,
Than eyes to the skies, the skies?

From over the western hills afar,
It seems, to them, He dies.
Nothing is more beautiful, pretty star,
Than eyes to the skies, the skies.

SANCTIFICATION

How oft for some exquisite land I yearn,
To free myself from earth's damp mist;
From mortal toil and soil unturn
Beauteous nature's girded fist.

How far above some peaked tops
My restless soul throbs, darts and hops,
To seek some tranquil sequestered nook.
Detached? Ah yes! Only in some immortal book.

THE FIRST LOVER

Alone in my garden I walk
Remembering much of our little talk,
And how you gently pressed my hand—
Now oblivious of that golden band.
How tall and strong and straight you stood,
Loving me only as a strong man could.
Now we are parted and something's amiss—
Nevermore to feel my first lover's kiss!

LOVE'S CHARM BROKEN

Gone is your old fascination for me,
Like a bird flown from where it perched
In an old oak tree.
Gone is your power to sway me,
Like a gusty wind where once gentle breezes
I felt but did not see.

GAINING LEISURE

Gaining leisure, pleadeth huge falls
For all mankind; o'er canyon walls,
Hangs an eager expectancy
Something predestined to be
Wrought, by the force; people will see
Some day that this great power
Rightly controlled, in one short hour
Can cause burdens from mankind to flee—
 Gaining leisure.

Listening, I heard this force say—
Use me! Use me! I humbly pray
To lift great loads, to set men free
To study; think; win victory
O'er sin; o'er self; along the way—
 Gaining leisure.

POVERTY

Poverty is not a lack of money,
Poverty is a lack of appreciation
Of beauty; of poetry; of motion;
Poverty is inability to be funny.

Poverty is a dearth of ideas,
Of ideals, of anticipation
Of joy; of humor and ambition;
Poverty is lack of mind areas.

Away with gloom about depressions,
Laugh, love, lift, glory in beguiling arts
That put fears to rout and challenge
People to overcome all their obsessions.

OLD REFRAIN

Ah, sweet, how wonderful thou art.
Thy beauty stings my aching heart.
Thy hair is like billows of gold
That flow upon some dream of old.
Thine eyes are restless skies that dream,
Thy lips are priceless wine supreme.
And thy ever haunting, yearning face!
How could I ever learn thy love?
How canst thou yield to my embrace
And say we woo as stars above?

EASTER

I saw them stroll upon the avenues
All decked in stylish garb and vanity—
And yet I wondered what it meant to me.
And now they streamed into the filling pews.
How glad each church this day when Christ subdues
And makes all men and all things bright again
In hope! But only if it could remain!
I cannot sing of Galilee and hues
Of lilies and a bleeding Christ they slew.
How can I sing when men decline to take
This Poet-Teacher's truths, for which he bled,
And cry "He is risen!" O, Christ is dead!
For men go on to kill, to gain, to break.
"Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

I DWELT IN SHADOW'S LONELY HOME

I dwelt in Shadow's lonely home
And thought that all the light was there.
But now I know how wrong the tome
I had so needlessly to bear.

DEATH OF SUMMER

I hear the tramp of autumn through the wood,
A great mysterious silence fills the earth
And sadness broods about the dreamful berth
Where summer sleeps! A-down her path a flood
Of mem'ries plays,—the glory and the worth
Of things so fair! Where grace and beauty stood
Remembrance droops her head in mournful mood!
Dear summer's dead, fair mother of our mirth!
How grieve the fields! How pensive stand the trees,
Untenanted, forsaken by the birds!
The butterfly hath fled, and searching bees
Along the flowered paths no more are heard!
Joy spreads her wings upon a languid breeze
And nature listens where her lost child stirred!

PRISONERS OF EARTH

O bitter fate that leads the hungry mind
To far frontiers, and there on mountain height
Reveals the glory and the luring sight
Of untrod fields, with naught of time to find
The untouched flowers which we have longed to bind
To wisdom's heart! How strange our helpless plight,
We who with eager heart to know the right,—
To follow on with feeble torch, and blind,
To reach the light that somewhere floods the doubt
That baffles our poor minds! Ah, there must be
Somewhere beyond the reach of mental route
Uncharted fields of vast periphery,
Where mortal mind shall find, still reaching out,
The circle of its lost infinity!

TO THE EVENING STAR

Whose skilled precision fashioned you
And geared and timed you for eternity,
And mapped your trackless course along the blue
From which you deviate in no degree?
Who launched you on your destined swing through space,
Along with other worlds of like mystic race?
And whence—and what—that undiminished force
That ever holds you constant to your course?

Whatever—who—what force of will or mind
It was—and is—must be a power divine
Who, guiding stars and worlds and universes,
Will, through that awfulness of power's infinitude,
Direct, protect and grant His gracious mercies
To one who gropes through life's dark solitude
And seeks the track and speed he's fashioned for:
Will hold a guiding light beyond the bar
Of that horizon of eternity
When he must launch into death's mystery.

O evening star! Bright beacon of the west,
You warn the simple wildlings to their rest;
Your torch of faith calls faithful ones to prayer
Who, seeing you, know God is everywhere!

APRIL WOOING

I must be working, loving, doing;
But outside there's April wooing,
Wooing me with glittering showers,
Violets, and other flowers.
"Come, oh come," she seems to say;
"Hurry, or it will be May."

EASTER

Now is the time of Eastertide.
The fields, new green with sprouting grain,
The lamb's faint bleat from the hillside,
The wind's warmed breath, the glistening rain,
All the wakening earth proclaims
That Christ, our Lord, is risen again.

DE PROFUNDIS

From milling throngs that strive and groan
Midst traffic's roar and siren's moan,
An anguished plaint comes low and faint:
"Alone! Alone!"

Though lamps may fill the shadows stark
With artificial glare—but hark!—
A cry of fright wails through the night:
" 'Tis dark! 'Tis dark!"

The untuned ear hears sweet accord
And thanks with silent praise, the Lord:
But cry and clash bring with a crash:
Discord! Discord!

Sad earth in calm repose is drest.
No stirring does that quiet molest,
Yet from the sky escapes a sigh:
"Unrest! Unrest!"

From clamorous turmoils that increase
Midst strife that never seems to cease,
A muted prayer floats on the air:
"Give peace! Give peace!"

DEDICATION

To a gardenia whose brief life
Was an exotic perfume
Of white-souled beauty;
Whose cool, soft petals,
Though yellow and withered
By human strife,
Have lingering still the heaven scent
Of love's first passion.

FLICKERING CANDLES

Memories as candles on an altar burning,
Flickering flames of hope and faith.
Each a prayer for greater understanding
Of selfish desire and life's relentless wraith.
Never fading, never dying, but yearning
The reward of constancy to prove
As faith in prayer brings answering.
Candles burn, nourished by acolytes of love.

SWEET NIGHT

Oh! Sweet night!
To lie abed, afar from earthly pain
On snowy linen, a coverlet
Of soft breezes, to kiss
Bared breasts and unsheathed limbs.
Heavenly bliss is the joy of rest
And abandonment in sleep.
Oh! Sweet night!

COMFORT

Oh! Hopeless love, like treasure trove, lost 'neath a distant sky,
Teach us to know as on we go, how sweet 'twill be to die.
Though hearts aflame live on the same, and broken hearts must sigh,
There is no peace to bring surcease to hearts that cannot die.

Oh! Hope of earth, that sees rebirth, beyond the jeweled sky,
Can there be joy without alloy, for us without we die?
Though fadeless light make glad our sight, when life has passed us by
Death's chiefest sweet will be to greet a love that cannot die.

THE RETURN

The sleeping doggies tremble as a shadow fares alone,
Riding back to the grass land, below the Cimarron.
With a pinto horse in the purple night, after the moon is gone,
Let me go back to my native haunts, below the Cimarron.

The pomp and the praise are ended and earth's bright lights are flown,
So let me go back to the grass land, below the Cimarron.
'Tis sweet to be back on the prairie, where the stars shine bright above,
To lay my bed-roll down at last, in the heart of the land I love.

I could not sleep where flowers were deep under a vaulted dome,
So I'm faring back to the grass land where my heart will be at home.
No power may strive to halt us, I'm free as the wind that blows,
For nobody sees but the doggie,—only the doggie knows.

DUST

Dust,
Gray dust, red dust, white dust, black.
Not swirling, blowing gritty earth
That blinds and chokes and thrusts us back.

But dust—
Air-laden, silent, moving specterlike
Gruesome, advancing,
Inevitably it enfolds us, claims us,
Dust-shrouded we sit; breath comes hard.

Dust—
Stalking—like a shadow of fate.
Dust—
That turns midday into night.
Subdued, immersed in dust, we wait.

Hours—
Dull, monotonous hours slide by;
Then toward the west,
Feebly, a sun glows in the sky.

Heavily—
We stir, we move,
Crushed spirits struggle to revive,
Will lost courage yet survive?

Dust—
Gray dust, red dust, white dust, black,
Strong hearts beat fast, hope swings back.

BEST WISHES TO A CLOUD

As up the hill I climbed with weary feet
And felt I could no longer bear the heat,
Dear cloud, you hid the sun, and for a space,
Gave cool, sweet shade. Oh, may you gayly chase
Your filmy shadow up the grassy hill
And tumble madly down the wind until
You pause at some cool lake and in its glass
Admire your rainbow flounces as you pass.
At evening, waltz with other clouds on high
Across the dazzling ballroom of the sky
And may you, tired at night, sleep on the breast
Of that tall stalwart mountain you love best.

LEAD HIM, MARS

My boy is lost in the mountain crests.
Red star, beckon him home with your keen light.
Swing low, Mars.
Swing high, Mars.
Lure him to struggle; urge him to fight
Wild beasts, despair, in the wild forests.

Each night he watched your war-spears of light
Over the back yard of his own home.
Lead him uphill, Mars.
Lead him downhill, Mars.
Through snow-banks, down canyons, in the foam
Of streams, make him battle through the night.

My boy comes out of the mountain wilds.
They carry him home—hush your songs, stars.
He is still
Far too still
No—he moves—he smiles!
Thanks, Mars!

BITTERNESS

Life's joys, life's depths I know them true,
But a flood of years like a bitter brew
Snaking through a land of yew
Poisoning the kine who trespass there
Sweeps back on me, as though to dare
My soul to wander in a future fair.
Oh, pagan gods!
What's the odds!
All men die and so shall I.

AN ULSTER DAWN

Dawn upon my Ulster hills,
The beauty and music of rippling rills,
Beams a-slant with liquid fire,
Mete subject for Apollo's lyre,
Swirling mist and mountain air,
The flash of a fox to craggy lair,
My springing feet on the heather brown,
A sea of mist away, deep down,
Creation's hush before a day new born,
My heart's song, an Ulster dawn!

ET SPERAVI

Hills that in the storm
Gloomed a menace and a dread
Are often wolds of beauty
When the clouds lift overhead.
Rivers once unfordable in the rain and mist
Will later gently bear us anywhere we list.

AUTUMN

Slate sky . . .
Through whirring trees,
Jagged, rust-strewn earth,
A ruffled bird cries in shadow
Alone.

NIGHT

Noises.
The ticking clock;
The far off chugging train;
A board creaks. The tired house sighs
And sleeps.

MAD SONG

The madman strode to the end of the sky,
A scythe of a moon in his hand.
Hurrah, he roared, slashing the night,
Hurrah for the madness of man.

Oh madman, sing your terrible song,
Oh beautiful, mad old man.
Go shout and dance, aye, laugh if you like,
But haste, old man, while you can.

Wear stars in your beard, and the sun for a cap;
Be idle and awful and bad.
They'll hear you, old man, they'll choke your song.
Oh madman, sing while you can.

THE CRICKET

I know a little fellow
With a coat of finest brown,
He skips and jumps from dawn of day
Until the sun goes down:—
His merry voice is ringing
You can hear it as you pass,
It's the little cricket singing
In the
green
sea
grass.

If the road of life be thorny
And the roses fade and die,
There are fairer flowers blooming
In the land of Bye and Bye.
Hope and courage for tomorrow,
Tune your heartstrings as you pass,
To the singing of the cricket
In the
green
sea
grass.

CANDLELIGHT ACROSS THE SNOW

Tall and slender stands the candle
Sending light across the snow;
Like the love of God, forever,
Burns its pure, white, radiant glow.

Gleaming rays that beacon upward
Like a prayer for earth below,
Guiding by its grace and beauty;
Candlelight across the snow.

WILD GEESE

Poised
A silhouette against gold clouds
Where rose and saffron fade
And all around a calmness rests
Above the dust of jade.

Erect
As molded in old Grecian art
Their graceful wings are still—
Only for one breath-take thus,
And then a change of will.

Silent
Beauty in a word is lost.
In front the leader flies,
And on they go in coursing flight
Where the land of mystery lies.

OUR FATHERS

If you don't know where the great men are,
In this good land and in lands afar;
Then glance about you and you shall see,
That just where you are may great men be,
The men that we call—"our fathers".

They may not be seen with banners high,
And greeted by kings as the world goes by;
But they work from morning and toil till night,
And walk life's pathway with toilers light,
These great men we call—"our fathers".

Our fathers are men that are truly great,
They faithfully labor and patiently wait;
Though some be feeble and growing old,
They're treasured more than treasures of gold,
The great men we call—"our fathers".

They build our homes and defend our land,
On the rock they build and not on sand.
To such renowned men we honor pay,
On this grand day which is Fathers' Day,
And salute the great—"our fathers".

THREE POEMS

I.

Truth and opportunity
Came to her
As rain,
While she stood
Motionless
As a statue.

II.

I just loafed all day,
Basked in the sunshine,
Watched the green trees
And all the outside things.
Then one day
A man came to my nice house
And threw a bomb.
Now the place is all black;
The trees are broken,
And I laugh and laugh.

III.

Oh true thing: a love to find,
A love to keep . . . through the silence
To the deep peace
That passeth all understanding.

REGRET

I stand before the glass in ridicule
Of my own self, who dared to censure you
And hold you to the strictness of a rule
Which I have broken—ah, so often!—too.
In tiny self-importance I have raved—
Have cut you with sharp words on every hand,
When all these moments lost might have been saved
Had I not thought myself too great, too grand.
Through durance strong, I have been brought to shame
And know the fool I am, the god you are.
In startled wonderment I breathe your name
Then bow my head, who tried to be a czar.

Fools always thus have stood and cheered for pride
Until that thief, in joust with love, has died.

DARK DUEL

Once, though I saw the things about me—sky
And earth, and how to walk and work and such,
I was so deeply blind! I wonder why
I could not see more clearly that your touch
Was all that stirred the sun and moon to shine
And that, bereft of it, there was no light?
Now in this utter night of dark, supine,
With crushing, yelping ghosts I weakly fight
Nor ever stab, nor ever one I fell.
No longer am I blind—but who slays dark?
There may be other loves; I cannot tell
What things may be, but this I beg you mark:

No other can this love for you allay,
For you are light to me, and you are day.

TWO WHO WERE LOVERS

You and I have come to this quiet spot.
Gloomy and dark here, but what matters that?
The light hurts my eyes . . . such peace and quiet.
I hear sounds as of harps, lutes and zithers,
Wondrous sounds as of angels' golden wings . . .
Have they golden wings—any wings at all?
That would be foolish—you do not have wings.

In this light you are beautiful, and yet
They say men are never beautiful.
The touch of your lips is as blood-red wine;
You set my veins on fire—
Arms around each other, bodies close . . .

How fair is the skin of your face—and soft!
No sea can be bluer than your eyes;
What maiden's lips are more perfect—those teeth
So even and white;
Altogether you must be a fair god.

Music again! The music of your voice . . .
The around is shot with stars—gold and blue stars.
The short-tailed graceful fauns with pointed ears
Beckon us—you and I . . .
Shall we join our pagan brothers, the fauns?

These trees have emerald leaves and amber stems;
This air is like glass shot with blue crystal . . .
Ah! Here are gifts of fruit and wine and bread;
Let us eat and drink and sleep, my lover . . .
No cities for us nor portals of walls,
Nor crowded streets but the portals of stars . . .

STREET OF DOUBT

I walk along the misty street of doubt,
Half weary, yet pretending to be gay,
My sight confused, my lips inclined to pray,
As passion beats my rebel heart about;
Desire's slave, I seem to be without
The will to snatch the gold from somber day,
And hope is dimmed by threatening dismay,
Though deep within prophetic voices shout.

But through the mist the glowing rainbow ends
Throw multicolored blooms about my feet,
And straight into my soul a shaft of light,
A beam from out the friendly sky descends,
And angel voices whisper down the street,
"The dawn of faith has passed the bars of night."

PLOWBOY

Plowboy, make your furrow straight;
Turn the teeming mold with true artistry;
A furrow is a poem in earth.

Plowboy, lift your eyes to the valley;
Beauty scatters her abundance everywhere,
And your soul should thrill with her patterns.

Plowboy, make your life straight like your furrows;
Like the mold let your soul be fertile,
And produce a harvest for destiny.

TWILIGHT DESCENDS

Twilight
descends upon me
watching a spider spin
in and out
out and in
weaving
his web across a pane of light
all alone I watch in the silence
the still silence
of the night
alone
alone.

ALWAYS I HAVE WORSHIPPED YOU

Always I have worshipped you;
In great sorrow steadfast, too—
Do not fetter me with chains
But understand my mood again;
Search into this heart aflame
Since my soul through ages came.

Though no bitterness can bend
One who loves you to the end—
When you've bruised and beaten me
Like wind across a proud wide sea,
Mere words never can atone
For my soul is mine alone.

THE MIRAGE

Out of the mist that arises
From the valley at break of dawn,
And slowly creeps up the mountain
To greet the coming of morn,
Appears a mirage in the vapor
Of a city reaching out,
And down in my peaceful valley
Are streets and people about.

Tears dimmed my eyes for a moment,
When I thought of my friendly trees
Being felled to make way for buildings
That would tower into the breeze;
But, when the mists had risen higher
And the sun burst forth in flame,
There, reflecting in its glory
Lay my valley just the same.

THE SKY AT NIGHT

The moon hangs high in the sky tonight
 A glowing ball of silver,
And billowing clouds of fleecy white
 Set the heavens a-quiver.

Now and then we get a fleeting view
 Of many a twinkling star
On a velvet ground of midnight blue
 Throwing its sparkle afar.

I am standing, looking toward the light,
 And wonder which star aglow
Is you, dear Lord, guarding us tonight—
 Your wanderers here below.

PASSING

There's no one out this time of night,
No one is passing by;
So I will speak of the things I please
With no one to deny.
I'll sing a song and kiss the earth
With none to ask me why;
I'll chant with dark winds of the night
And give them cry for cry,
Until our songs in echo freeze
And fall down where I lie.
I sing a song for life and earth—
For they are passing by.

DAY DREAM

The clink of my glass against two spoons
Made me think of the clink of doubloons
Dropped by pirates in a massive chest
While the sun like a doubloon sinks in the west
And the sharp wind cuts like a two-edged dirk
As the topsail fills and begins to jerk.
The moonbeams glide on the blue wave crest
And the eerie gold glitters in the great battered chest,
As the pirates divide it with a curse and a song
And the echoes linger joyously and vibrate long
Till the pirates turn their bumpers of ale and wine
And drink to the health of the foamy brine.
I can see that old ship now, gliding over the main.
" 'Ere, 'ere! How's that? Yes, it does look like rain."

AN IMPRESSION

Strangely clear her profile shone against the arching stars;
Antiquely wise it seemed, and sad, and peaceful too.
More than this single earth can teach, it seemed, she knew
As strangely clear her profile gleamed against the planet Mars.

While thus I saw her soul behind the temporal bars,
It seemed not old, it seemed not young; for it had always been,
And always would be, with eternity to win.
Thus curiously I mused upon her face against the stars.

AUTUMN

Rose-cheeked autumn with blowing hair,
Fleet-footed runner on the hill,
Light-bringer to the gloomy wood,
Why will you pass so swiftly by?

THE REASON

Why is it that a man must die?
Why must he lay his body by?
Why must he pass from earth away
While this unfeeling stone may stay?

On the earth man's days are few
For he has so much to do
In the universal space—
And the earth's so small a place.

There's so much for him to know—
That is why he soon must go.

FIRST LOVE

Willow boughs shadow the river
While the moon, like a scimitar, glows
As you and I in a transport of bliss
Heed not the wind that blows
Through valleys filled with purple shadows,
And tangled briars for unwary feet.
No footsteps shatter the silence—
All earth seems fast asleep.

But our first kiss is so ecstatic,
We care not how the world goes by.
Bright is the earth with love's illusions,
Reaching high pinnacles that touch the vaulted sky.
A roseate glow from our fond hearts
Is filling the air with promises so true
That every shrub and bush in sight
Seems laden with love transfigured to our wondrous view.

Love high and restless as the river
Flows like a cloud dream at our feet;
And breezes creeping in the dim, vast distance
Are filled with fragrance as they rush to greet
The wooded heights with clear, updrifting music
Of Sabbath bells cleaving the darkening sky.
I love you; yes, I love you, sighs the wind.
As, struggling, it dies down with fluttering sigh.

WINTER FRAGMENTS

I.

Winter! howls the north wind
As he hurls his icy breath
Through the gaunt ghostly trees.

II.

Winter! murmur the cold, white crystals
As they softly fall in rhythm
O'er the dead brown leaves.

III.

Winter! whimpers the half-clad urchin
As he lifts up his red hands
His eyes asking, Please.

SKETCH

Two trees stand in the meadow side by side.
All day blows the wind: the sere grasses hide
From his swift hot breath, and from the two trees
He turns out spangled coats of silver. Bees
Are aerialists on the bright swooping flowers;
While the twin trees sway through the lively hours
As if they, too, had a rich beauty, born
In their firm hearts, and ready to adorn
The world. 'Tis an old clarion of death,
It is wind singing autumn with his breath,
It is a new time come.
A patient waiting for the fingered frost,
A rustling greenness in the heavens tossed;
Lo, the bright leaves turn home.

CRUCIFIXION

(*A Protest Against the Teaching of Communism in the schools*)

'Tis said that "Sitting down they watched Him there,"
Coldly aloof from His dread agony.
Bones racked apart, eyes glazed in deep despair,
Alone he died upon that awful tree.
They watched—ah yes! His enemies watch still.
Again the clamor rises "Crucify!"
Not on the cruel Cross of Calvary's Hill,
But in the hearts of children must He die.
They shall not know their precious legacy,
Their own from children of another day,
(Who for His blessing crowded at His knee,
And to Him clung when they were called away).
Old in their youth, hopeless, their greatest loss—
Never to see the light shine from the Cross.

SCATTERED AND BEAUTIFUL DUST OF THE DEAD

Scattered and beautiful dust of the dead,
That spreadest o'er earth the grace of flowers,
Upthrusting a bloom for every tear shed,
In grief's most drear and desolate hours.
Does the soul when first from the body free,
While panting to soar to the realms of bliss,
Pause by the clay that once held it in fee,
And press on its lips a life-giving kiss?
In the cold ear whisper, "For us no time;
No more shall we count the pendulum's swing.
I shall wait for thee in heavenly clime;
But thou to the sheltering earth must cling
Until the last great trumpet shall sound, and then
Transfigured, renewed, we shall meet again!"

DEATH

The wings of dark surrounded me
 And yet, the west held smoky red
As though it drained the color left
 In falling leaves and autumn spread.

Like death's decline when day is done,
 The splendid sun sank down to rest
And stole the warmth of living life
 And left behind a world oppressed.

The stars stared out with eager beams
 And caught the red in autumn sun.
A glowing band of happy hues
 Disrobed the blackness one by one.

The great moon joined in silver song
 And spread her mantle far and wide,
Illumed death's night and pledged a faith
 In brilliant tints for those who died.

SLEEP

O, let me float above the earth
My bed a soft gray cloud,
And rest my head upon a screen
Of sun dipped splendor red.

My quilt shall be of deepest blue
Its pattern twinkling stars,
My lamp shall be the flaming sun,
Extinguished brings the dark.

The night wind's song of sleepy strains
Shall be my lullaby
In drowsy flight the clouds drift by
And I am fast asleep.

THE QUEST

We boast of lore, yet do not understand
The season's cyclic swing in measured beat
Through sowing time and harvest in the land;
Winter, summer, know their hours and greet
Us every year in their allotted place.
We grope in vain as eagerly we try
To pierce the mighty mystery. We face
Defeat each time we question how or why
Some potent passion stirs a buried seed
And dark roots start with pulsing throb and thrill.
Life moves to rhythm. The cloud, the gliding glede
Through earthly vault of blue; the tiny rill
That tumbles over rocks; the ebb and flow
Of ocean tides in meted time and form;
The slow and weary trudge of those who know
The grind of toil, the pitiless toll of storm;
The dance of joy; the ceaseless whir of wings;
Springtime lilacs, autumn goldenrod;
The moon-swept woodland where the night bird sings,—
Are striving toward the consciousness of God.

POST-TRANSFIGURATION

You were no more at last than other flesh;
You were no god, but man: your praise fell hollow,
And all my tuning could not strike afresh
The lyric strain that hymned you as Apollo.
Your ways were mortal—yet a while you trod
The city streets and places that I loved,
Resplendent in the trappings of the god,
And music fell around you as you moved.
And though you went at last and left no traces,
Fickle as snow upon the April grass,
A radiance lingers in familiar places,
Now left forlorn, where once you used to pass;
And sometimes, stooping in some trodden way,
I lift, amazed, a fallen leaf of bay.

AUTOCHIRURGERY

Strike at the root now: kill this friendship early.
Loosen the soil; unplant it from its bed.
Only a friend can hurt you; not the surly
Judgments of foes and strangers that are shed
Like rain upon a soil that holds no seed.
Let these soft roots dig deeper in your life
And you can never free them: you will bleed:
You will be torn. Go with your garden knife
And cut it cleanly from the fruitful soil.
You will forget it presently, will rest
From growth and pang. No memory will coil
Under your heart. Better a barren breast
Than this thing blossoming with its alien fruit.
Oh, kill it early: strike now at the root.

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

Forbidden fruit,
You hang so high!
Your shape is fair
Your color bright—
More bright and fair
Because so high.

I watch another
Lift her hands
And smile—
And lo!
You drop so lightly
Down to her!

NIGHT WITH THE MOON AND YOU

Sing of your hills in the setting sun,
Your slumb'rous ocean's single sail;
Sing of your sunbeam-speckled lanes—
But I'll take a ride in the moonlight pale,
In the night with the moon and you.

The cricket's chirp, the frog's bassoon,
The light wind's soft melody;
The fluttering maple's whispering boughs,
The fragrant pine's harmony—

Sing me a song that is low and sweet
To a tune that's a light caress;
And I drift away in a silver boat
On a dream that's dreamed, I must confess,
In the night with the moon and you.

AMERICAN FARMERS—1934

Ay, patient toilers—
rich soil;
Rich enough to feed a man.
But drought's another thing—
A million men may toil,
Not one of them can sing.
Drought's another thing-Ay!

Ay, patient toilers—
rich soil;
Enough for men and cattle.
But wheat must have its price—
A million men may toil,
But few can roll the dice.
Wheat must have its price-Ay!

Plow under, man—
teeming soil,
Enough to feed the hungry.
But trading—thieving rings,
A million men may toil,
But who gets the reapings?
Trading—thieving rings-Ay!

Ay, patient toilers—
good soil,
Enough to feed a nation.
But drought's another thing—
A million men may toil,
Small wonder none do sing.
Drought's another thing-Ay!

WINDBOUND

Lie down to die?
 Oh no!
Rough the way
 we all
 must go;

Venturesome, uncharted ways
Speak the span of all our days—

 Supine, sometimes,
 Often weary,
 With the trek
 Unduly dreary;

Lie down to die?
 Not I!

ATTESTATION

Of such strange fabric
 is the subtle rose—
To hazard what, I never
 can suppose:

But this I know—
God touched it—
Made it glow;
It grew
 and then
became a counterpart
 of you.

TONIGHT

Sadness descends with the night.
I feel an unutterable longing
As Darkness sprinkles her shades
Upon the earth and me.

I wonder if life is worth the while
And love is worth the worry.
When night time comes, nothing, it seems
Can matter, but death and the dark.

So in the night I think about life
And in the night I dream about death.
Can it be—that death could come like night,
Floating stilly and softly from heaven?

THE HOST

We dine tonight at the table of life,
And our meal will be served by candlelight,
We shall feast and partake of the meat of man's soul
And our wine's the wrath of God.

The board will be laid by one we know
And be served by the angel of death.
Our cups will stay filled
Though we drain at one draught
The wine that's the wrath of God.

And then when we leave
The white lights will go on
And our host will be revealed.

REMINISCING

Reminiscing through the years gone by,
Regrets and failures mount up high.
Reluctantly I must admit,
My plans the pattern did not fit.

I designed and planned a garment rare,
And measured inch by inch with care,
To find when finished sagging lines,
Or puckered places oftentimes.

So now the task for me is plain,
I'll plan no more but hope to gain,
A knowledge that will help conform
Unpleasant things that must be borne.

WHY?

I wish I knew the why of things
Why those who try hard fail,
Why those who never seem to try,
Sail on as in a gale?

They tell us good is its own reward,
And maybe this is true,
But why on earth is a good man's load,
So hard to carry through?

Each day he struggles and toils and frets
For those he loves and needs must serve,
The breaks he earns he seldom gets,
While the guy sails on with a lot less nerve.

He never cares if his pal makes port,
Nor what happens to the rest,
While the good man shares with every sort,
Still hoping to be blest.

PALMETTO NIGHTS

In the quiet of the evenings,
 Long past the midnight hour,
Listening, you hear nightingales
 Singing from their bower.

Soft, whispering winds sway the branches
 Of a lonely pine tree there,
While the rustle of palmettos
 And perfumed hibiscus fill the air.

The swish of the restless water
 Of the wondrous ocean blue,
Makes you thankful you are near
 When the long day is through.

There you catch a breath of salt air
 As it comes up from the sea,
Where the silver moonbeams play
 'Neath the shadow of a tree.

Through the branches of the royal poinciana
 With moss plumes hanging low
You hear the strains of soft, sweet music
 When the gentle breezes blow.

You feel the spell of the tropic
 Firmly holding you in its grasp;
You have no desire to leave it,
 You are satisfied at last.

You heave a sigh of contentment,
 And smile at the bygone strife;
You know you will live 'neath the palmettos
 So long as you have life.

COURAGE

Fear not! Know well the past is dead,
And with it dead, in truth,
Its fears should lie, as lie its dreams,
The callow dreams of youth.

A coward thou! The future kind
Her portal opens free,
And thou dost doubt! Say, when hath fear
E'er grasped a victory?

INFATUATION

Unsought, yet welcome, spirit strange,
How bringest thou joy and grief?
What draught of nectar, mingled deep,
Alas! with fennel leaf,
Thou pressest to reluctant lips—
In vain from thee they shrink,
Though bitter sweet, what thou wouldst give
I may not choose but drink.

With gentlest touch thy silken cords
Bind fast my enraptured will—
Thy fetters shall I ne'er escape,
So harsh, unyielding still?
Had I the strength to shatter them
Have I the will to flee?
What sighs are mine, my freedom lost!
What sighs! were I set free.

CESSATION

Nothingness above
 Below.
And all around;
A pale monotone of water
Stretching to the far dim horizon—
And soughing, soughing
 Interminably soughing
On the colorless shore.
Suddenly over all
 The night
Drops its toneless quietude.
Not a gleam quivers
In the fold on fold of inanity
Forming the passionless sky.
Soundless, lifeless.

UNSUNG

That hour, mutable,
Holding our hearts in sway,
Of immeasurable ecstasy,
Rejects the poet's lay.

God gives us memory
Treasuring long
A glory of tenderness,
Too deep for song.

NIGHT IS A TAILOR

Night is a tailor with flexible fingers,
Fitting the fabric of darkness
To the nudity of buildings,
With lights sewn like buttons
From story to story.
I count them swiftly,
"Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
"Doctor, lawyer—
"And a button missing!"
Night threaded the lights
On a single strand. I fear me,
With one loop severed,
Shall go, also, to misfortune,
(Or dinner),
Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
Doctor and lawyer.

MAYTIME

Over the hills we go today
And through the pale green woods of spring
Where, rose and cream, the dogwoods spray
Their blossoming boughs and seem to sing

A song antiphonal with trees
Where apple blooms, in white and pink,
Old winter's sadness now appease.
See where a lamb has come to drink

At that small sky reflecting pool,
Made freshly clear by recent rain,
While cloud blown shadows, light and cool,
Passing, repeat the song's refrain.

DRIFTING

Aimless, we drift along upon the tide;
Like pleasant dreams the shores on either hand
Reflect pale silver birches as we glide
Out of the woodland ways, leaving the land

Behind us. Now upon a quiet lake
Our boat rocks idly in the glare of noon
And no one tells the craft what course to take
Or spreads a sail to ask the wind a boon.

Better that we had never started out,
Better that we had never left the land
Than, without purpose, like a useless lout,
Never to see the billowing sails expand.

Oh shape her course and set her canvas wings,
Ready the instant that the wind awakes;
Better the chanty that a sailor sings
Than the dull ease an idle listener takes.

MEDITATION IN FIVE ACCENTS

Like pauper who at night must dream he is
A king, and as a king must dream he is
At night a pauper once again, nor knows
Just which is which—a shade within a shade,
Life and death are two concentric circles
Each so close to each that neither has
Existence or distinction from the other;
That man who would immortal be must first
Destroy those very things required for life!

So said I to myself and so believed,
For I had scraped the bones of thought all night
And laid each one to dry upon the shelf,
All night in depths of darkness heavier than
Oblivion within a brain long dead,
And found my answer with the morning when
The hours beat out their tension on a gong.

"Good morning, Day!" said I. "I know you now . . .
You are the selfsame day the ancients saw;
And when you tear me screaming from the teats
Of blood, when I am weaned of this—my life,
You still will be, as you have always been!
My rope of habit will untwist, each strand
Will straighten till conformity returns,
Back to the germ again and back, the hemp
Will bloom and quicken—go to withered seed,
Another rope by other hands be turned,
What shape, what place, what time—who dares to say?"

THE FLAMING OLD INTENSE DESIRE

The flaming old intense desire is gone,
And love, my love, not so supremely fills
Each waking and each sleeping hour. The frills
Have lost some glamor. Now, no lover wan,
Assailed with doubt, and sleepless till the dawn
Lifts heavy eyes to somber, velvet hills,
And breaks in desperation futile quills,
Devising praise beyond comparison.

And yet, my love, though ardor may be spent,
Misgivings we'll not have, nor raging tears,
Nor rue to rend our fabric of content.
Attuned in tastes and hopes, our bonds are deep,
And we have made a marriage that will keep
Our hearts undying, singing down the years.

THY SOFTNESS, WIND

Thy softness, wind, from other nights
I thought forgotten, breathes,
And on the relics of the past
Lays fragrant wreaths.

Years, years ago, love stabbed me first,
The night as sweet as this—
A setting, languid yet supreme,
For love's first kiss.

I know not where she may be now,
My dim remembered love;
But softly, softly on her, wind,
Blow from above.

LONELY HOURS

A pale blue sky bends o'er the hills;
 A large gray cloud sweeps up the west,
And, rising higher, slowly fills
 The round of heaven with its breast.

"The leafless branches snap with cold."
 The burning ivy banks her fires;
Still beauty, though a pilgrim old,
 Fills many hearts with fond desires.

No note of bird, nor lightning flash;
 Only the wind in treetops tall,
And thud of raindrops as they dash
 Upon the shingles and the wall.

Among the willows' knotty maze
 The brook slips by with mournful sound;
No wind-flowers—as in summer's days—
 Along its reedy marge are found.

Grim gray and boundless runs the sea,
 And white her lips as those of death,—
White as the seagulls winging free
 Before the cold storm's icy breath.

The hand of desolation's pressed
 Upon both mountaintop and plain.
A few white snowflakes from the west
 Hide in the dark skirts of the rain.

The lips we love fond memory seeks.
 The hands grown cold are pressed by ours.
And lashes, tear-wet, sweep our cheeks
 In silence through the long, dark hours!

Ah! who would seek the past again?
 Who would not pass the future's gates?—
Dear Muse, teach us the glad refrain:
 "Joy comes to him who patient waits!"

SADDEST SIGHT

I know
No sadder sight
Than sparkling, unshed tears
In startled eyes of one who loved
In vain.

CEMETERY

"It is beautiful here in September
When the leaves first are touched by the frost,"
She used to remark, I remember.—
It *is* beautiful here in September,
Though my heart lights the smoldering ember
Of a dream that is faded and lost.
It is beautiful here in September
When the leaves first are touched by the frost.

ON SEEING ORION

Orion, hunter of the frozen skies,
When first I saw you brave the charging Bull
I stood spellbound until my soul was full,
And with your blazing glory filled my eyes.
Between awed words of wonderment and sighs
Around my heart I felt some certain pull,
Like one who from his view has brushed the wool
And sees the naked truth to his surprise.

How vain and fickle man must be to dare
Say by his power alone he sees the stars,
Or knows how far away they are up there,
Or swears he sees canals on ruddy Mars.
Oh, God, how vain, how fickle man can be!
And you, Orion, brought the light to me.

THE PATH OF PEACE

Ancient errors still retrieving,
Seek the good in every land.
Ancient feuds forever leaving,
Work together, heart and hand.

Souls will be released from prison
When life's rules are understood.
When the light of love has risen,
All will work for all men's good.

Greed must give its place to giving,
Till no more misunderstood,
All have learned the art of living,
All are seeking other's good.

Man must recognize his brother
And with him cooperate;
Each one plan to help another,
Leave no room for scorn and hate.

There must be no selfish nation
As all colors blend in white;
In our League association,
Races, creeds and castes unite.

Let this be our high endeavor
Always in the world's great school:
That all nations, now and ever,
Measure life by Golden Rule.

REUNION

Long ago
On a barren plain
We said good-bye.

We could see miles
In every direction
When we parted.

Over the wind-swept, treeless prairie
You made a path
For yourself
And I watched you
As you walked through the long grass
Toward the westerning sun . . .
Then I turned
And went the other way.

Each step we took
Separated us
Till the distance between us
Was great—
Too great, we thought
Ever to be retraced.

And now—
The sun giving light to our footsteps—
We meet
On that same barren plain
Once more.

THE HIDDEN GOOD

What is it haunts the golden day
With beauty that is more than loveliness—
Makes of the gleaming, silvery night
A thing with heaven informed?
If sun and moon,
The changing earth,
Were the sum total of delight
What then of darkened hours that come
To fill the soul with deep unhappiness?
Fear—awful doubt prevail—yet it is ours to know
That in the mud and scum of things
There always, always something sings.

MESSENGERS OF NATURE

Arbutus is brightening the woods
With berries of crimson red;
The violets are peeping forth
And nodding their wee heads.

The rhododendrons stately
With blossoms of pink or purplish red,
Fit in with nature's color scheme
And make us love the woods.

They are harbingers of the spring,
A token from Mother Nature,
Saying, "Spring, spring, spring—
Spring has really come."

INGRATITUDE

Show not ingratitude to God and man
If benefits they try to give you.
Recompense not good with evil
And dig not a pit for others' souls.

Stick to that which is right and true
Always obeying the Golden Rule;
For God has truly warned us,
And this warning we should heed:

That those rewarding good done unto them
With evil insincere,
Shall evil have in their homes
To dwell throughout the years.

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

A monarch proud, I've waited here
With none to understand,
I've watched the seasons come and go
In silence awesome, grand.
My mountain-neighbors, kin of mine,
The lake and waterfall
Are near me, and the matchless sky—
The shelter of us all.

In winter cold with icy gems
I see my shoulders gleam.
In springtime sweet the flowers come
To meet the golden beam
Of life anew; another thought—
I see 'tis summer fair.
Then autumn's kingly robe of flame
With glee I proudly wear.

They call me old, but what is age?
In days when worlds were new
I took my place in grandeur tall,
I've kept it eons through.
I know my face is sad and grim—
But here I stand apart,
Wrapped in my forest-blanket wide,
With memories in my heart.

I look down through the valley long,
Awaiting eager feet
And lifted eyes,—I see them all
I take their homage sweet.
But none may know and none may tell
How patiently I stand,
For those to reverently come
As to their fatherland.

CAWN BREAD

Gits yo' from de cupbo'd
Pot what thick, like iron.
One gits mos' goodliest hot,
Holds heat de lon-n-ngest time.

Tuk ah cup o' yellah meal,
Half dat 'mount light flour, too.
Ole bakin' powdah, three teaspoons;
Same sugah, what ah do.

Right smaht pinch o' salt,
Braid don't be's so tame.
Two cups milk yo' po';
Shawtenin', pair tablespoons de aim.

Fresh aig he'ps—
But beatin' mo'.
To mix hit up
Am quite ah chore.

Whilst messin' yo' dough
Ole pot warms jes' right.
Bacon rine melted good,
He'ps de cook ah sight.

Po' mixture in de pot,
Sum sugah light on top.
Be's niggah way o' doin'
Kause crust brown ah lot.

Shoves whole batch in oven,
Den sits down an' rests.
Long cums fifteen minutes
Gives thin' ah test.

Hit' peah light an' looselike,
Flip dat pone cl'ar ovah.
Ten minutes mo' all dun be's dun
Ready fo' folks to eats an' run.

COMPENSATION

The bright flame that lit
The beauty of autumn days
Yields to nature's sterner mood
As winter approaches—ruthless and cruel—
And the days grow dark and cold.
Yet I sink not joy in dismay;
'Tis true, I know not why
The rose in her misty veil,
To protect her flowering branches
From the cruel, wintry blasts,
Sleeps in the tissue of her roots
And hides the secret of her magic
So that beauty, ordained to be,
Shall flower again and again.

TRANSMUTATION

From galling grief, soul! mold a cup
And fill it up
With love and understanding rare
Of others' griefs, denials, care,
That they may sup.

From failure, shame, a stout staff make
Which one may take
For aid in climbing up the road
So steep and hard, with heavy load,
If he mistake.

With wild unrest and longing light
A beacon bright,
That it may serve as shining ray
To help another find his way
Throughout the night.

Transmute, Oh soul! life's joy and pain,
To thy great gain
Of tolerance, along the way,
For those who sometimes seem to stray.
And peace maintain.

FLIGHT

All the birds upward flew;
I suddenly knew
In my heart was born joy.
Dear love! It was you!

Now at end of the day,
The birds flown away,
I sit here all alone.
Love, could you not stay?

FETTERED STALLION

That stave is like a body holding down
the soul. All things must have a living
and a grave. That bright arched neck
can still look up to find the sky;
those nostrils fleet as wind
drink in the new morning.

Oh put down the burden of your champing feet.
Make a tourniquet of courage to still
the bleeding in your eyes. What does
your heart know of ocean that it should dance
as waves? Rest now.
No one small field on earth is wide enough
to hold your wanderlust.
Stay for the moment: afterward will come
the knife to rend your tether.
Stay for the moment: no quarrel
with a piece of iron driven through raw earth
will set you free. No white teeth shedding foam
are knife-keen enough to hack
a hempen rope.

Earthbound, stallion, are you so weary
of being earthbound? What voice in the wind
calls you to spread invisible wings,
fly to the outposts?

Stay: life is a little moment in a little field.
There will be a master to set you free at nightfall.
And the stall is so warm at the last.

THE CAPTURE

A spire,
Far reaching
For the naked moon,
Which moves across
The sky,
Snags itself
Upon the piercing apex;
And caught there
Sinks along
The slanting side
Into the black.

WEST BOTTOMS

The smoke-smudged stacks
Loom black against the blood-smeared sky.
And as the dank dark smell of cattle
Vies for strongness with the sulphur smoke
Just let off by "The Chief" in pulling out—
The elevated street car, rocks and teeters
On the trestle, warped and old.
Shaking,
It wabbles on ahead—gouging in the twilight.
Some stock, pushed and plump,
Prepared for packing; jammed and crowded
Up against the boarded sides,
Low loudly to the fence that holds them in so tightly.
High above the unused box cars, that are
Resting on the rusty rails,
A mail plane seems to stop as if to catch its breath—
Then drops across the slimy sluggish river
To its berth—and sleep.

THE AXIOM

What God calls love, fools forfeit.
With dynamite they toy.
And often blast the little bridge
'Twixt earth and heavenly joy.

WHEN MY BELOVED PLAYS

When my beloved plays, my heart's at peace
With all the world. The live responsive keys
Kiss her soft fingers. Heaven's overtone
And the composer's soul pervades her own
Like sunshine in the orchard's blooming trees.

When she reaches impassioned depths it seems
With Chopin's nocturnes, and Beethoven's themes,
Her music then becomes a living thing
Of tones, that phantomlike haunt one with dreams
Of images that move, and love, and sing.

WITH THE TREES

With troubled soul, into the wood
I'll go, where trees can nurse my mood.
And there I'll idealize a tree,
And worship it, and call it thee.
In solitude I'll spend the day.
And with the zephyrs learn to pray,
Until that tree shall know thy name,
And burst into a holy flame
of love. Yes! Like the bush of eld
The prophet heard, and God beheld.

SONNET: AND IF IT NOT BE LETHE

And if it not be Lethe after death,
And if there be some memory of this life,
Some heaven or some hell, some quiet or strife,
Some silent sullen place where lingereth
To plague or please our spirits as before
The tears and laughter, all the joy and pain
That we have felt, and these are felt again
—Not less the sorrows, and the joys no more.—
And if instead of mere oblivion,
There be an after life, then as I die
I'll turn my face from thee, lest one
Slow smile of joy should linger in your eye,
And I should feel my death had brought relief
To you, but brought to me a harder grief.

SONNET: I REACHED TO TAKE THE ROSE

I reached to take the rose you offered me
And clasped my hand about a pricking thorn.
I drank the wine of praise you proffered me
And in it found the bitter dregs of scorn.
I said again soft words I heard you speak
And in my mind I saw your mocking eyes.
Recalling every word I tried to seek
In vain, to find one truth among your lies.
You still can laugh and mock me in my grief
And say, "Our love was never meant to be."
When other lips than yours shall give relief,
You will not be the one who laughs at me.
Then you shall come to me with heart forlorn,
And I'll recall the past and laugh with scorn.

THE POET'S COMPLAINT

When hearers praise the songs I sing
 In words which sound sincere,
I cannot proudly therefore cling
 To laurel wreaths held near;

Cannot exult because the fruit
 Of struggle born of pain
Is counted by the world as loot
 From which receivers gain.

For I most keenly am aware
 How slightly lyrics voiced
Have drawn from heaven's wellsprings, where
 My thirsty soul rejoiced.

MARVEL DAYS

There are days which resemble the loveliest scenes
 That a master of art could paint,
Which are filled with pure beauty and nothing of wrong
 Which could ever offend a saint.

Every hour of such days, like each pictured part
 Of the landscapes that masters draw,
Holds its quota of beauty, its share of delight,
 And one could not discover a flaw.

All such days, it would seem, are forerunners of that
 Which is promised in Holy Writ—
When all darkness and grief shall have passed away—
 Which by love's torch alone is lit.

But these wonderful days which we sometimes live
 In this faulty old world of ours
Are so fine we can scarcely imagine a one
 More demanding of artist's powers.

A FEW FLOWERS

THE MADONNA LILY

A holy cup,
With little yellow angels
Rising up—

APPLE BLOSSOMS

Are fragile dancers,
With large skirts
Which the wind blows off,
Petal by petal—
Then the dancers disappear,
Leaving apples in their stead.

WATER LILIES

Are little nymphs,
Looking up to the sun all day;
But when the night comes,
They hide themselves away.

THE ORCHID

A colored spider,
With a large mouth
That gently blows forth
A light, cooling odor.

THE POPPY

Sliced heart,
With center of spice.

EVENING

Evening is a pleasant time
to sit around and talk
or,
Take your car and ride around
or,
Take a little walk.

Evening is a pleasant time
to sit and dream of things
that never will come true
but,
Oh, it's great to dream and build
great castles in the air,
And then to see them crumble,
fall,
and fade away.

Evening is a pleasant time
to kneel,
and pray,
and say to Him,
Dear Father, I am thankful
for this day,
and
Hope that I have lived in such
a way—
To be a friend to those who came
to say:
Hello, how are you today?

BY THE RIVER

I stood by the river's side
And watched with happy heart.
For you were by my side,
And my love and yours a counterpart.

The soft radiance of the moon,
Caressed brightly, with silken beam,
The water as it rippled in tune
To my blood, flowing with the stream.

Your eyes shone so brightly,
And I tingled to my fingertips.
As my hand you touched lightly,
And I caressed your sweet lips.

As I gazed at the sky above,
My heart with joy grew as wide.
And soft winds whispered of love
Because you stood by my side.

Now I stand by the river
In the moon's pale glow.
My heart seems to quiver
As the winds like an echo blow.

The stars are set in frozen sky,
And my spirit is low as the ebbing tide.
And a tear slowly leaves my eye,
Remembering—when you stood by my side.

SURRENDER

Good-bye, my paradise of dreams,
 Away all worth and wealth of May;
O hide from me each sparkling theme!
 Alas, Godspeed me on my way.

My heart doth sink within my breast,
 Throbbing, crushed it falls.
I gather up your last caress
 And slip beyond your walls.

My steed is shod and ready there—
 Ah, I fain would linger longer,
But fear my destiny of despair—
 The whims of fate are stronger.

Behold yon trumpet loud and strong,
 Its fiendish chords, and low;
Hearken the witchery of its song,
 I dare not choose—but go!

A master in a strange, strange land
 Has sounded his summon'd call,
As echoed o'er the windswept sand,
 I hear and heed them all—

A toast to fate! A toast to fate!
 The mighty and the clever,
Whose schemes and themes we can't abate
 Though we strive, endeavoring ever.

A toast to fate! A toast to fate!
 Grim keeper of the scroll,
Whose themes and schemes we can't abate,
 I decree to him my soul!

Begone, my paradise of dreams,
 Away all worth and wealth of May;
Withhold from me each sparkling theme!
 Alas, Godspeed me on my way.

GOOD-BYE

The hardest thing in the world to say,
 And yet it must be said:
The hardest thing to pretend you're glad,
 When you'd rather weep instead.
The hardest thing in the world to feel
 You won't be gone for long
When your saddened heart just will reveal
 The burden of your song.
The hardest thing in the world to say,
 But the sweetest thought to know
Your friends would like to have you stay,
 And hate to see you go.

THE AUTUMN SPIRIT

I quivered, and with awesome wonder
 Knelt trembling upon the sharp-pronged ledge
That marked the mountain summit; and far below
 Rose slantingly the painted valley's edge.
While mosaic hues burned my poignant soul
 With colors that far surpassed the oriental rugs
Of mightiest wealth; and shades that dimmed
 The paisley shawls of the great and richest judge.
Breathless mysticism paralyzed my heart,
 My very soul, and mind; till I lifted my eyes
To the heavens above:—and prayed aloud:
 "Almighty God, my longing spirit for Thee sighs,
No more thy Presence shall I doubt or fear,
 No longer crave a proof of thy dear love,
For yonder hills portrayed in flawless hues,
 Proclaim thy tender care to all—below,—above.

SIMPLICITAS

Hidden in the northern plains
(Where the strength of silence reigns
Through the air, and in the clouds,
On each snowdrift which enshrouds
Grassy slopes and timid flowers,
Round each hillock, through short hours
Standing as it has endured
Centuries therein immured)
Lies a gleaming frozen lake—
And the plains thus made to break,
Gather round and look on high;
For between it and the sky
No confusing shades appear
And the hand of God is near.

INSIGHT

Red fire flames from its pointed peak
 Illumining a waste of ice and snow;
The frozen airs, the waters, seldom flow;
 Yet like a heated rod with sharpened beak
The flame pierces the frost of years. Though bleak
 And wild for living men, yet there I'd go,
If true it were that spirits to and fro
 Could dart wherever the swift mind should seek.
For long, long hours I'd float upon the air
 Like an unruffled wreath of frozen mist
Sparkling beneath the thin blue light of stars:
 What would I do, watching life's prison bars?
Think how the body only doth despair,
 And learn by earth of what the stars consist.

THE CHANGELING

When into my life, O love, you came,
 When first you lighted from above,
Your vision then of me was veiled,
 And your regard for me was love.

When all of my life you came to fill,
 Nor clearer view was in your mind;
Nothing was then amiss in me,
 For simple love is ever blind.

But when it chanced your bandage loosed,
 And clear from its folds your gaze looked out
On faults that all along were mine,
 Oh then, your changed regard was doubt.

Your bandage-knot I sought to retie,
 And hasted with all the haste I could;
'Twas then I saw that love was flown—
 That in love's guise a changeling stood.

When out of my life that day you went,
 In vain I called you back to me;
Nor knew where doubt has entered in,
 No room is left for love to be.

AVIATOR'S LIFE

'Tis merry death calling me gayly,
It's him I hear luring me daily
In heaven with him to abide,
And cast life's false joys aside.

So joyously fly I to meet him;
My life's but one of God's whims;
Death is the entrance to life.

So laughing I go toward him gayly,
Him who's invited me daily.
Toward him is a rather slow ride,
To honorably meet him my pride.
Let him put on his very best smile,
To welcome me on my last mile.

Earthly life may be long and tedious;
Death comes but once in all while;
Rebirth may be swift and delicious.

A BAG OF FOOLS

Isn't it strange that the demagogues' rings
Make us serve their whims like foolish things,
That naive fools like you and me
Are builders for their supremacy?
To each of us is given a book of tools,
Printed tickets as votes for fools;
And each of us makes by folly his own,
For them ourselves their stepping stone.

SOLACE

Child of grief and sorrow
 Lift up thy head
For there's a tomorrow—
 So it is said.

Fear not, nor shed a tear
 Although it's hard,
For One is ever near—
 And that is God.

For some there's happiness
 With little strife;
Others are not so blessed—
 But that is life.

OLD LOVE

I loved you once
With a wild, mad passion;
But that is past—
Nor can I love you now
Or hold you fast.
Like years that travel by,
My love is gone.

You challenge me
With kisses burning hot,
And would revive
The flame of love grown cold.
It can't survive,
Disturb its ashes not,
When love is gone.

MOODS

I love the beauty of the earth,
The beauty of the sky,
Though many things confuse me
As they go passing by.

I love to hear the city roar
Its clamor and its mirth;
I love the bursting silence
Of the growing things of earth.

I love the blare of radio,
And starlight's orchestration;
I love the stormy sea tossed high
In angry depredation.

I love the wind's confusion,
Its tumult and its roar,
For I can drift along with it
Beyond where it can soar.

And yet I love the tender things,
With a love akin to pain:
The sweetness of a wild rose
Along a dusty lane.

The chattering of the birds at dawn
Up in the cherry trees;
The tinkling stir of bluebells
Aroused by honey bees.

I cannot understand it all,
For I can only *see,*
But God, when he is ready,
Will unfold it all to me.

THE SUNSHINE VIEW

Sometimes blue skies are dimmed by clouds
That look to us so dark and drear;
But if we turn them inside out
We see the silver lining clear.

Life holds for us sweet joys untold,
Dear nature with its mysteries;
We only have to go half way
To earn such simple joys as these.

There're friends and loved ones, comrades too,
Who share our every joy and pain;
And joyful tasks for hands to do
That mix the sunshine with the rain.

So many things to make us glad,
We scarce find time for discontent,
For all our time is taken up
In counting blessings He has sent.

So when our lives seem dimmed by clouds
That look to us so dark and drear,
Just turn the lining inside out
And see the sunshine lingering there.

YOU

You are something soft and tender
 Under a carnival song,
A steady, lilting rhythm
 That catches me up and along;

A tangle of wind in eyes that laugh
 Under a mass of black hair,
Cleanness and trueness of sunlight,
 Calmness of midnight prayer:

A mood and a strength to hold me,
 Protective, vibrant and gay;
You are a gallant ghost that shall go
 Singing with me alway.

THE LAST DANCE

Bring me the gown I wore a night long spent
When my flashing dance and the flashing eyes
Of a watching world in mystery blent,
To the sheer scarf fame—a shimmer of dyes;
And the silver white and the white of me
Slashed a glamorous rent in life's drab cloak;
For today I dance in an ecstasy
Whose rhythm beats with the tower clock's stroke;
For at dawn I dance on the same light feet
With the same high laugh I thought to forget,
And lead sings sharp in the song I meet
In a last, abandoned pirouette.

THE CLIMAX

The flower closes that the fruit may form;
The builder seeks to place the coping stone;
Some worthy part, by which he may be known,
Would each producer add to make the norm,
And then excel, perchance—despite the storm
Or other hindering thing—to stand alone,
A hero who has come into his own;
A name to prize while love of friends is warm.

The root and flower make the way for fruit;
Foundations need their superstructures, too,
Completing that for which they have been laid;
The goal of every purpose and pursuit
Becomes a perfect climax, in review,
Combining all the beauties that pervade.

AUTUMN LOVELINESS

The autumn green now slowly turns to gold
With crimson tints in spaces here and there;
While frosts are not severe, no trees are bare,
And ripening foliage gradually grows old.
The change in color marks the manifold
Display of nature, as the seasons share
Their beauty in succeeding order to prepare
For winter when dead leaves make rich new mold.

Each autumn day adds worth to memory's store,
Until the season holds them quite complete;
Then, other autumns take their place beside
This last, a pleasing vista to provide;
The mental picture grows from more to more,
And life, with many autumns, seems more sweet.

CINQUAIN

On, on,
Death goads our souls
To certain life; the while
Disintegrating shapes for earth,
Beauty.

GAY AUTUMN LEAVES

Don't rake the leaves up yet—
Such lovely gold and red!
Let's romp with them and see them gayly scatter;
Dance with them and hear their merry chatter,
Before we make their bed.
Don't rake the leaves up yet!

THE JEWESS' LAST WORD

O, adverse winds, you may howl and scream,
And tear my branches down;
You may tear up my roots and take me away
Over mountain, plain, and town;
You may do your worst, for well I know
You'll tire and you'll set me down;
Then again I'll rest and again I'll send
My roots through the cool damp ground . . .

I'll enrich the earth again!

IRIS

In the sky, blue after rain,
A rainbow, brilliant hued—
Its colors drifting down
To earth
Form a rainbow, many hued,
In my garden.

DAWN

In the east
Shines the sun
Clothes the earth
Bronze Indian maiden
With a veil of mist
Rosy; seashell hued
Until the earth
Lies suppliant, waking
In his warm arms,
In the strong arms
Of her true love
The Sun god.

Thus is born
The new day.

DEATH

A beautiful gate
In a hedge of roses sweet
Where loved ones wait
Lovingly to greet
The dear one
Entering there.

INTERIM

I went companioned by the wind on heights
Where wild weak sunlight, scatter-blown and tossed,
Clung to the smooth-swept slopes. Now, lone and lost,
I wander through the ways of moonless nights—
I, intimate with stars. Beyond the lights
Of city cheer, storm-caught, the rains accost
Me. And the harsh, hard pellets slap the glossed,
Glad ground. The rain delights and yet affrights
Me. I have walked upon unpeopled ways
In calm content. I know now rain and sun—
I, friended by the windy stars. For days
I will remember this, this day, this run
Through rain and night. And now my heart recalls
A wind-cleft fig tree near the Trojan walls.

PENETRALIA

O silent Muse that stands beside me now
And looks beyond my dim world's little space
And haunts me with thy calm, unfathomed face,
Those dark eyes seeing all, that smooth, white brow
Unfurrowed, not perplexed nor pondering, thou
Hast perfect knowledge. Would thou hadst the grace
(Or I the faith!) that here, now in this place,
Thou wouldst but bend thy look and here allow
That I might read the truth of what thou seest!
Or failing that, I now would be content
With sign to know thou some day wouldst deign speak
And tell what long has been unspoken, pent
In thy mute soul. I would vain groping cease,
Anon pursue my little way at peace.

GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

I saw him cross the threshold of the door.
His step was slow, his form was bent and old.
The time, to me seemed short, a year—no more—
Had dulled his sight, his face seemed pale and cold.

The double dealing he'd been made to share,
Had slowed his heart; and father time, with scythe
Brought snow that never melts upon his hair,
And bent that weary form that once was lithe.

He came with measured tread to share a smile,
And took a proffered chair beside the fire.
His clothes were worn and old, not quite in style,
His coat encased a heart that could inspire.
Unfaltering faith had brought him face to face
With sturdy, stalwart life his weakening frame belie.
The years that now are vain had taught a manly grace
To one immortal soul that was not born to die.

SPACE

A black canopy covers all;
In it twinkle star-groups,
 Here the Ram,
 There Leo or Big Bear;
For eons and eons, thus,
They have shone forth.

Some are of bright newness
Rivaling the diamond's sparkle,
 Others are yellow or red,
 From vast age;
Yet time immortal
They shall still be there.

The Milky Way wends a path
Among the scattered stars,
 Now Vega,
 Now Arcturus or Orion bright;
Its path is cleft at times
By meteors in headlong flight.

Vega, Arcturus, and Orion;
But where are we?
 Our Sun, our Moon,
 Our Earth,
Are cosmic dust
Dashing through black void.

WHEN THE COLUMBINES ARE BLOOMING

When the columbines are blooming
Round my cottage in the hills
It is then I'm filled with longing;
Yet my heart with memory thrills.

It was here beneath the pine trees
That you pledged your love with mine,
And the token that I gave you
Was a lovely columbine.

When the columbine so stately
Blooms again for you, my love,
Then we'll settle down together
Like two turtle doves.

MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS

I love to scale your mighty peaks,
And gaze upon the distant scenes.
'Tis here my soul with God finds peace,
As I sit beside your sparkling stream.

And as I gaze there comes to me,
A scene from another land:
'Tis the hills of Zion in all their majesty,
And Christ with His heavenly band.

Though men may build great temples to
The God of all the universe,
Yet let me climb these mountain peaks,
'Tis here with God my soul finds peace.

DESIRE

May we ever catch the vision
Of a great and mighty goal!
Striving each day to make decisions,
Heaping fire on the coal,
Using as materials these:
Love, understanding, courage true,
Grace, beauty of wisdom, multiplied
Until we cast earth's robes aside.

MOONLIGHT IN THE FOREST

When the full moon in its beauty
In the deepness of the night,
Bathes the forest in silvery light;
And the leaves rustling gently, softly,
Wafting a low crooning song
Of all the bygone ages;
And the present time, rushing on;
Through the heart of the forest
All is quiet, safe. A night bird's call falls
Sweetly; the mate's murmuring echo rings.
Bathed in the moonlight and dew
Beneath vast, cool moonlit spaces,
Shine on, gentle moon, in the forest.
Play on swaying branches and leaves!
Your romance sheds beauty about us
In a myriad of golden dreams.

ECHO

A melody drifts by;
And in its path it leaves a void
In which a thousand memories
On wings of song are carried.

It's strange what tender things
Songs may play on memory's strings:
A kiss one night, a loved one's eyes,
Dreams to which one ever clings.

Just a simple echo,
A lovely past . . . just an ember
That is stirred to glimmer and glow
By songs that I remember.

ESCAPE

I've lived in a world of dreams
For dim dark ages, or so it seems.
Now I'll cast aside from me
These dreams, and make reality.

Instead of flimsy spider web,
I'll follow life before its ebb.
I'll face beauty and drink it deep,
Piled high in my soul to keep.

Dreams aren't enough; my desire
Grows in me as a forest fire—
Grows until it must destroy
This mind of mine, as though a toy.

And so I'll seek the long low plains,
Mountain tops and lonely lanes;
Drink life's wine and drink it clear.
God and beauty are ever near.

WHITE PINIONS WAIT AT MY WINDOW

White pinions wait at my window,
To bear my soul through the night.
And my heart dissolves in longing
To open the casement white.

The brethren need me, Gabriel;
I must not come today.
I must sing of the beauty of living,
And of dying—and then, away!

AN AUTUMN GARDEN

The serried ranks of faded phlox
And sere and leafless hollyhocks,
Of iris with its rusted blades,
And zinnias, burnt to ember shades,

Stand like a battered legion here,
Swept by the winds of winter drear,
Capitulated to the frost.
Yet who shall say the battle's lost?

ONE FLOWER

Not ships that sail the sky-lanes,
Nor wings of thought sublime,
May bear me to the land I dream,
Where is no shore nor time.

And when some mystic chariot
Shall pause to bear me hence,
Lay this one flower on my heart—
"True faith, without pretense."

LOVE'S ENDING

Press not my lips and violate thy vow!
 My love for thee is dead; for thou
Hast kissed other lips than mine—
 In passion's poisonous hour,
I wear upon my breast a pure white flower.

Clasp not my hand. Your hands are dyed in sin!
 See! These scarlet drops of blood!
How grim!
 Fresh from the dagger thou didst plunge into my heart.
 Ah fiend! How thou dost start!

Put not your arm about my waist—
 Rememb'rest thou the time we stood in fond embrace?
Days! Days long dead—here in my heart they lie:
 Crushed broken flowerlets that were you—and I.

Stand back, thou cruel one! I can ne'er forget
 Thy fiendish glee. God! It is with me yet.
I see thee gloat o'er tears that I have shed—
 I only pray that God brings vengeance on thy head.

I only ask that God some day shall bring to me
 A new love, a clean heart; and then I shall be free—
Free from the chain you forged with drops of blood
 Drained from the true heart that once you loved.

Go! Take thy bliss from wanton lips that sell a kiss for gold!
 Fool! Fool thou art, and old—
Blind in thy passion's fiery sin—
 Go! Drink to the dregs the cup of death: sin.

A RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Lo, I wrestle as the Titans
Of Hebraic Israel fame.
Strength consumes my zealous passion
And I mighty wonders claim.

As the last round's faded shaping,
I behold midst lowering clouds;
I conceal my spirit's weakening
And with faith my all enshroud.

In the darkness I am wakened
As each step upward I count;
Angel forms my soul entwining—
Yea, I hold them as I mount.

NIGHT

Deep in thy dark and dismal delights,
Deeper in thy borrowed beauty's glare
And heavenly plan of silvern spires,
Of life's feast the solemnest share.

The brow of heaven beams with stately
Vision, when thou art high in reign;
The heart reviews in panoramic
Play, her wanderings true and vain.

Oh night, how beautiful in thy white
And gauzelike shimmering defense;
When sleep should veil the saddened eye,
Then sorrow seems the most intense.

Yet in thy deep realms revealing right
And wrong, we find a dim delight
That reawakens pleasant pleasures
As the morn moves on in gray light.

ENDURANCE

Only endurance remains
When dreams are done;
When dreams and hopes have faded,
Withered, fallen, one by one.
Only endurance remains
When love is gone.

Yet, 'tis not the vine,
And bush, and tree,
But just the leaves and bloom
That fall and die.

Tell me, then, can it be,
If endurance weathers through,
That dreams and hopes
May bud anew?

ASHES OF CONQUEST

When it came, I took your letter
And bravely tore it into bits . . .
But the next day madly strove
To place the scraps together.

Then I flung the pieces about the room
In a wild abandon—
Only to gather them up again,
Dazedly kissing them, each one.

I crushed the fragments in my hands
As though to wring their meaning;
And pressed my face in the crumpled mass
Moaning, and brokenly praying.

COOPERATIVE

The gardener loves the garden
 Or he'd not work so;
The garden loves the gardener
 Or 'twould not grow so.

TILLING

It's sweet to tend
A flower bed
And watch the blooms
Lift up their head.

It's much more wise
To watch our thought
And find therein
Just what we ought.

And still more sweet
To tend a child
And see to it
He grows a smile.

ALL IN A NAME

The rose was red
 But never fair;
It pricked my hand
 Until it bled—

All because I'd not impart
 A secret of my own
In threat of dart
 From a rose that was full-blown.

PARADOX

When shadows cease to be,
The phantom of a tree
No longer hugs the dawn.

Birth of death
Is all that breath
Of man dares pawn.

To search for strife
Is what this life
Can give.

Its bitterness
Is life's largesse
To live.

ETERNITY

Heart that was stone—
Aloof I found,
Weeping alone
On dismal ground.

Till darkness came—
All sounds of mirth
Remained the same
Within this earth.

Light was here
A forged spark—
Embittered, sere,
Forever dark.

FOLLOW THE STARS

Catch life's vision, high and true,
Through the vistas of life's maze;
See the white star on the blue
Beckoning, guiding through the maze.

Wounded soul by careless tongues,
Watch the star that marks the goal;
Welcome stings, rebuffs and taunts—
These arm with steel the soul.

Though our feet with earth dust burn,
And our brows with heat are dewed,
Through the eye the soul discerns
White clouds drifting on the blue.

WINNING

When turmoil beats in the deep of the soul
And the struggle sweeps waves high on the shore,
Don't try to retreat before you are beat;
Stand by and win or go down in defeat.

You may go on, but you can't go back;
Today may be father of tomorrow's lack.
The courage with which you fight this day
Will gird your arm for the next hand fray.

Be like the brave who hear the alarm
That rings from fear and doubt and harm,
But in it hear not the sound of the knell
That rings for the fall of the many that fell.

Winning may not mean the best of the fight:
'Tis standing your ground in the cause of right.
The spirit with which you deal the blow
Is the true test of the victor's glow.

ALCHEMY

I know a pasture on a wind-swept hill,
Stony and bleak, unlovely to the eye;
Untouched by spring's rich burgeoning, it glows
Rose-red beneath the sun of hot July.

Among dried mullein stalks and brown sweet fern,
Crowding the moss-grown rocks and crumbling fence,
The sturdy "Steeplebush" their spires raise
Unto the sky in stately eminence.

A sermon this bright humble flower might preach
To many a hurrying passerby; and those
Who wonder at such beauty and forget
The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.

SYBILLA'S SAMPLER

A strip of faded canvas in a frame
That once was gilt, now faded—dulled by time.
Across the top a prim, red house, a tree, a flowering vine
That twines around two alphabets wrought in silken cross-stitch fine;
One large, with curling capitals; one small; beneath, this rhyme:
"Youth has alas but one short spring;
So fix thy thoughts on heaven.
Eternity is near at hand.
Made by Sybilla aged seven."
Now looking at the lovely work of her small childish hands,
One hopes her spring was gay and sweet,
Her glass ran golden sands
Through summer's beauty, autumn's glow. Then, with thoughts fixed on heaven,
Serene, she faced the winter snow: Sybilla, aged seven.

TWO SACRAMENTS

When sunrise gilds the sky deep in my heart,
The sacrament of hope is born anew;
And by its promise I may walk apart,
Nor lift unto my lips life's cup of rue.

At eventide the sacrament of peace
Steals o'er my path as red the sunset glows.
It calms my fears, my vain forebodings cease,
While to my soul its benediction flows.

COMPENSATION

Though love has passed me by I still have dreamed,
And hope within my heart has come to life
Until the vision of my days but seemed
Reality in which all joy was rife.

I do not ask to have the flame I lit
Burn to the end with love's fruition sealed.
I only pray that I may cherish it
Close in my breast until its scars are healed.

The shining of the road I have not missed,
The song of homing bird unto his mate,
The beauty of the rose by dewdrops kissed,
Though love must come to me too late, too late.

I SAW HER STANDING THERE

I saw her standing there,
So pretty and small—
My sister dear
Whom I loved most of all.
She waved her little handkerchief
And I waved back to her.
The train then rolled away
And all became a blur.
The sun set black that day.

The years were passing fast,
Youthful years of hope
With promises to last.
No sorrow brimmed the cup,
But dreams that someday soon
I would find her standing there
Just as I left her that day at noon—
My little sister dear.

But years are traitors to our dreams.
I see myself; I fear to see
Their treatment of the one I deem
The fairest gift of God to me.
Nay, give me her as on that day
I saw her standing there—
So pretty and small—
My sister dear
Whom I loved most of all.
She waved her little handkerchief
And I waved back to her.
The train then rolled away
And all became a blur.
The sun set black that day.

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What caused her roving tender glance to linger
Katharine Valentine Carasso
What God calls love, fools forfeit *H. Dana Strother*
What is it haunts the golden day..*Sallie Smyser*
What is life? Is it the passing *Ina Ertman Barres*
What terrible heartaches doth call to memory *Douglas Merbach*
What though the skies are gray*Lucia C. G. Grieve*
What thoughts I think the world can never know
Andrew J. Lotz
When are you happiest, oh trees?.. *Constance Praeger Fox*
When beauty of the summer decks the land . *Jessie Jane Caskey*
When hearers praise the songs I sing *Lillian Mathilda Svenson*

When I came down to Trinidad, the west was bloody-red
Bertie Cole Bays
When I go down the valley *Helen Streeter Lampe*
When I have done my last kind deed *Grace Tarleton Aaron*
When into my life, O love, you came *Helen Stuart Thompson*
When it came, I took your letter *Madeline L. Winsor*
When I recall my blundering words to thee . . *Jack Bogdonowitz*
When love lay dying *Florence Thiot Milner*
When my beloved plays, my heart's at peace ..*H. Dana Strother*
When robins build, in early spring. *Mary Flagg Hurlburd*
When shadows cease to be*Paul Wolff*
When sunrise gilds the sky deep in my heart
Madeleine W. Wyatt
When the columbines are blooming*Katherine Whiteley*
When the full moon in its beauty.....*Hulda M. Wilke*
When they brought bread *Mercedes Miller*
When thy dear face has not this rosy glow *Ben Arc*
When turmoil beats in the deep of the soul
Alpha Snyder Woddell
When weary and worn in body and mind, I go
Blanche C. Howlett
When we pass from this earthly life *Laurence J. Goins*
When you are gone I shall not weep *Polly McKibben*
Where ever he went the answer was ever, forever no work! no work!... *Mat H. Ilde*
White-capped waves around the Bay.... *Mary Flagg Hurlburd*
White pinions wait at my window *Addison Willis*
Who are the great interpreters of life?..... . *James Andrew Giffin*
Who sayest thou I am?.*Doris E. Almy*
Whose skilled precision fashioned you *Clyde E. Nicklas*
Who taught the first bird to sing?.. *Clara A. Geiser*
Why is it that a man must die? *Edith Lindsley Reynolds*
Willow boughs shadow the river *Maud Gardiner Reynolds*
Wind is sobbing, the *Kenneth Roy Gilchrist*
Wings of dark surround me *Lurena Rowe*
Winter! howls the north wind..*Ransom Richardson*
Within my hand I hold a rose *Minnie Rowan Goodrich*
Within the spell of spider web*Katherine B. Andrews*
With troubled soul, into the wood *H. Dana Strother*
Words you spoke, the *Mary Margaret Archbold*
Work fast *W. A. Barton, Jr.*
World is wide and the call is strong, the *Dorothy Eastland*
Wouldn't you like to be free?.....*Ruth Flanagan*

Years may pass—oceans roll between..... . . .S. *Gwendolyn Leo*
Ye fools, fast bound in creeds long antiquated *Howell S. England*
You and I have come to this quiet spot *Joseph M. Portal*
You are something soft and tender..... .. *Elizabeth Wayland*
You drank *W. A. Barton, Jr.*
You gave me a dagger of singing steel *Bittie Corbitt*
You gave me wild honey and bread..... *Bittie Corbitt*
You have only taken.....*Elen Z. Forster*
You looked up at me from the bed..... . . . *Anna K. Hawkes*
Young April came to Kansas clothed in a dusty gown
Bertie Cole Bays
Your memories spread joyous wings..... . .. *Polly McKibben*
You said, "If I were dying and you came, I would not go,"
Anna K. Hawkes
You were no more at last than other flesh *Helen Lacy Rummons*
You who trudge along under cloud banks of indifference
Vladimir Babikoff
You would give love so sweetly, simply, friend....*Kaethe Ihrig*

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